

An end to innocence

Nicholas Tucker

REINHARD KUHN

Corruption in Paradise: The Child in Western Literature
264pp. University of New England Press, £16.
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Anyone who attempts to cover such large topic within one book faces enormous difficulties, since all fiction, whether it specifically mentions childhood or not, reveals attitudes to the young. In *The Awkward Age*, Mrs Brook's two younger children are barely mentioned and never actually encountered, even though they are also living at home during the progress of the entire story. Yet their very invisibility is as telling as some of James's explicit comments about children in other novels. Studies that only focus on main child characters also neglect important minor ones. But an author's attitude towards them is often more informative than the hallowed treatment reserved for the great literary sci-pieces of childhood, such as the stories of Paul Dombey, Little Nell or Oliver Twist.

His own wide scholarship and FRESS (File Retrieval and Editing System - especially acknowledged in the author's preface) have enabled Reinhard Kuhn to select what he regards as the most significant books and poetry dealing with childhood over the last 2,000 years, excluding books written especially for children. Kuhn traces four main themes concerning childhood. First, the "Enigmatic Child", who lives within a self-enclosed, non-referential universe: wise beyond their years, such characters all have a definite message to deliver to the adults around them, yet

are doomed to be misunderstood or ignored, usually until it is too late. These children can either be redemptive, as in *Silks, Manners, or Men*, or menacing, as in *Jude the Obscure*. Second, the many depictions of childhood as symbolic of either Heaven or Hell, with children themselves often shuttling between the two during the same novel: sometimes they take their revenge on their tormentors; elsewhere, they turn against those adults determined to create an artificial paradise for them. In either case, according to Kuhn, the child resents the efforts of adults to shape his world. This is questionable - birthday surprises, treats and other evidence of positive parental planning are often rapturously described in fiction - and to go on to state that "it seems to matter little" whether this external shaping is at the hands of benign or malignant adults is plainly absurd (especially in view of the stomach-turning passages quoted elsewhere in the book about various barbarities practised on children both in fiction and in life).

Third, Kuhn turns to the theme which forms the title of his book: corruption in paradise. This section deals with the way that literary childhoods are so often destroyed by a revelation of sex or death, which brings an end to childish innocence. "Because Thannatos and Eros have no place in the cosmogony of children and because these two gods cannot be expelled, Eden must be destroyed." Books considered here include *The Mill on the Floss* and *The Turn of the Screw*, although not *The Go-Between*, which unites both themes in its final chapters. Lastly, there is a separate discussion on the death of the child, used variously in fiction as a way of making a social protest (*Les Misérables*), in form of metaphysical revolt (*The Brothers Karamazov*), or as a comment on the

ever-precarious nature of childhood (*Dr Faustus*). A fifth theme, sub-titled "Voices of Childhood: the resonance of modern poetry", is also put forward but fails to cohere. Had Kuhn lived to see his book through publication, it is possible that this section would either have been strengthened or scrapped.

In fact, much of *Corruption in Paradise* stands as a noble epitaph to a fine scholar. The breadth of its argument is a welcome change from the usual plundering of Blake, Wordsworth and Dickens whenever this topic is discussed. At the same time, the less familiar mid-European sources cited, such as some harsh, cynical picaresque novels from sixteenth-century Spain and seventeenth-century Germany, are a reminder of how more protected were the childhoods of generations of Britons. For whatever the privations of cold, hunger and over-work of British children, their sufferings bear little comparison with the horrors visited on children as a result of catastrophes like the Thirty Years War, or the sadistic traffic in child beggars described by Victor Hugo.

On the other hand, the breadth of Kuhn's researches also represents a danger to this study. So many sources, yoked together over different times and cultures, make for generalizations that are sometimes superficial rather than profound, given that literary sources are related to each other rather than to the divergent societies that produced them. Considering many different works of prose and poetry also entails a great deal of plot summary; never an easy thing to do gracefully, and made more dubious here by some important mistakes in detail. A larger question, though, is posed by the very nature of the whole book. A mere rearguarding of different literary childhoods is not really enough to justify any study, but the

author has also achieved something more durable. The four main themes which he puts forward are indeed statements about childhood that have an extra significant, perhaps archetypal meaning in the human imagination, and the case for seeing them in this way is convincingly argued. A qualification would be that other persistent images of childhood also exist in literature, such as the child as truth-teller (the Alice stories and *The Emperor's New Clothes*), the child as moralist (Huckleberry Finn or Mrs Ingham's *Nonne und Ari*) and the child as alien rather than enigmatic, as in a number of twentieth-century novels. Mentioning other competing images of childhood does not devalue those discussed and illustrated here; it does, however, make them seem rather less central in their importance.

At times, Kuhn makes larger claims for his study in another direction, hoping that it will illuminate not just fictional children but real ones as well, leading to moments when the reader is not quite certain which is being referred to. This is a serious ambiguity, since whatever their similarities, flesh-and-blood children often have little in common with their fictional counterparts. In fiction, childhood is frequently depicted as an existence where children spend much time in the company of adults, behaving according to largely adult thoughts, emotions and predilections. This picture is both comprehensible and appealing to grown-up readers, who themselves usually find it easiest to recall those moments of their own childhood closest to the adult way in which they now think and feel. Aspects of childhood that do not lend themselves so readily to mature memory, such as fragmentary, time-bound thinking, discontinuous logic, free-floating anxiety, fantasy games or extended, desultory conversations with other

children, are normally absent from adult novels about childhood except in rare cases, such as *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or Joyce Cary's underrated *Chrissy* is my Darling.

Kuhn clearly recognizes some of these shortcomings in fictional descriptions of children, yet at other times still prefers them to alternative explanations. Because novels find it more dramatically satisfying to suggest a state of innocence duly to be shattered by knowledge of the sexual act, he argues that there must be some truth in this idea, despite evidence not just from Freud but from the conversations, jokes and songs in any school playground. Some children, it is true, were once obviously more sheltered than they are now in these matters, but the author does attempt to describe twentieth-century childhood too, and here he often appears out of both depth and date. As it is, the image of the enigmatic child today has largely been taken over by science fiction, with ET the latest in a long line of puzzled visitors from elsewhere. The shock of discovering sexuality is not so much concerned with the act itself, but with whom it is being performed outside the family, while the Hell of childhood is more often due to terrors caused by other children than by adults themselves, as in William Trevor's *The Children of Dymouth*.

But if the history of twentieth-century childhood in literature has still to be written, there is much in *Corruption in Paradise* that is usefully informative about previous ways of writing. As such, it deserves to take its place alongside Peter Coveney's *The Image of Childhood* as one of the few books that honourably attempt to equate evocative childhood literary descriptions with the experience of childhood itself, while still remaining sensitive to the essential mysteries of both.

TLS

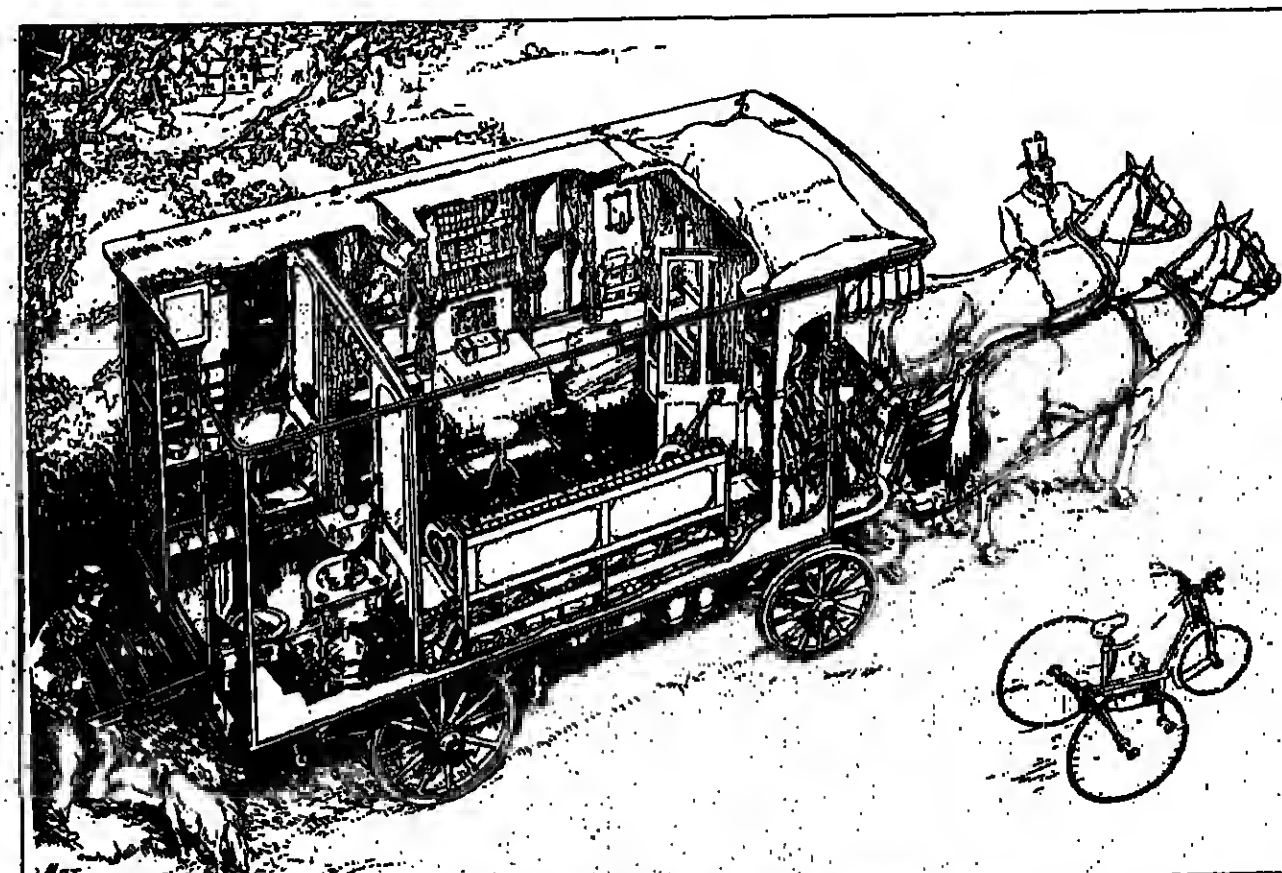
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An aristocrat among scholars

E. J. Kenney

ANTHONY GRAFTON

Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship. Volume 1. Textual Criticism and Exegesis. 359pp. Oxford University Press. £27.50. 0 19 814850 X

Those who, like Macaulay, begin with the frontispiece, will be disappointed here. There is a good reason for this omission, for the familiar representations of Scaliger are highly misleading. Anthony Grafton's portrait bears little resemblance, for instance, to the magnificent engraved image that confronts the reader of the 1627 *Letters* over the portentous and pregnant legend, FVIMVS TROES. Such icons belie the reality, which was considerably more complex, and less creditable – but more credible.

The scholar of whom Mark Pattison wrote that he "became . . . the very law of his intellect" emerges from this masterly study as above all preoccupied with recognition, and none too scrupulous in the quest for it. It is the development of Scaliger's mind and scholarly activity that Grafton has set out to expound; this is intellectual biography of a severe order, documented in minute technical detail (the notes and appendices take up some 120 pages of close print), and it cannot be pretended that it is easy going.

To the general reader the lives of scholars and scientists are interesting chiefly in virtue of the quirks of their common humanity, endearing or eccentric or outrageous as the case may be, but often having little direct bearing on the assessment of their work. The dilemma, though, immortalized by Pope, is thrown into the shade by the peripeties of Bentley's long and destructive war with the Fellows of Trinity. What fascinates the non-mathematical reader of R. S. Westfall's brilliant life is the involvements of Newton's quarrel with Leibniz – which had nothing to do with the validity of their discoveries – and his precarious negotiation of theological thin ice. The fundamental insights which have gone to build up the science of historical criticism sound, plausibly set out, like truisms. The processes which gave them birth are complicated and frequently obscure, and the problems from which they arose highly technical. The grand projects which will be discussed in Grafton's second volume – Scaliger's epoch-making work on ancient chronology – sprang from the minute and pedantic study of Greek and Latin texts in Grafton's words, "An accurate intellectual biography of Scaliger must be the story of what he thought about textual problems." There are those who relegate textual criticism to the intellectual level of the crossword puzzle and proof-correction. I cannot suggest a better corrective than a careful reading of this important book.

Its subject amply justifies the nature and the scale of the treatment. Had Richard Bentley never lived, Joseph Justus Scaliger would have been the greatest classical scholar of all time. Bentley found first-rate biographers in Monk and Jebb; Scaliger has deterred enquirers. The standard life until now has been that published in 1855 by Jacob Bernays, a work of great distinction by a scholar whose own stature was such that (we are told) Ingram Bywater, no contemptible judge, would raise his cap whenever he had occasion to pronounce his name in a lecture. Pattison, perhaps the only man in Europe then competent to do so, reviewed Bernays's book and himself projected a biography. His intention was to write Scaliger's life "in connection with the religious history of the time." Rudolf Pfeiffer has commented, "I regret to say that he would never have been able to execute this ambitious plan."

Ambitious it certainly was: Grafton's book strongly suggests that it was fundamentally misconceived. Without doubt Scaliger's religion was important to him – it was no light matter to turn or to remain Protestant in late sixteenth-century France – but it

does not appear to have been the mainspring of his intellectual life, at least not to anything like the degree postulated by Pattison. What actually dominated his career and came close to wrecking it was pride of family. This, of all errors, is one against which a scholar who must have known the works of Horace and Juvenal by heart should in theory have been secure; and indeed in the fatal manifesto in which Scaliger laid himself bare to the furious malice of his enemies he paid lip-service to the commonplace that true nobility is in ourselves: "unusquisque . . . auctor nobilitatis suae." They are hardly to be called our own, observed Ovid's Ulysses, that great meritocrat, of family and ancestors and inherited goods. Scaliger had read these words as he had read everything written in Latin; but if he saw the better he followed the worse.

The roots of this obsession lay in his relationship with his father, Julius Caesar Scaliger, a scholar whose fame was overshadowed only after his death by that of his son. Joseph was eighteen when his father died, and for the last four years of the old man's life he had lived and worked under his daily supervision. From this association he acquired two things, a mastery of composition in Latin and the fixed belief that his father was the last of the line of della Scala, lords of Verona. The first formed the basis of his matchless facility in the emendation of texts. The second nearly destroyed him. He had no reason to doubt the truth of his father's story, which indeed was generally accepted by his contemporaries. His princely descent is celebrated in the funeral orations of Helmsius and Baudius, as also in the monumental inscription in which his father was described as "PRINCIPVM VERONENSIVM NEPOTIS"; and as

late as 1671 it was confirmed by a grant of Louis XIV. Nevertheless the story was false. Julius, says Grafton bluntly, "was lying". The lie put his son in an impossible position. Pattison in his MS notes went so far as to say that this belief in his nobility "must form for us the clue to his entire character". This judgment he slightly modified in his review of Bernays; but it is no exaggeration to say that, if the language of Scaliger's letters and of the notorious *Epistola de vetustate gentis Scaligeriae* is anything to go on, his preoccupation with his family identity bordered on paranoia. "I have known for a long time that I am beset [oppugner] by the enemies of the name I bear." It was not enough to be convinced himself: "not to be drawn as noble is to be known as ignoble."

It was this insistent craving for public recognition, not of deserved but of inherited merit, that led Scaliger to publish in 1594, shortly after his migration to Leiden, the open letter to Douss from which these quotations are taken. One sentence reads ironically: "Somehow men pay more attention to libellous buffoonery than to good books." The dictum was borne out by the appearance in 1607 of Scapellus' *Scaliger Hypoballismus*. This chef d'œuvre of character-assassination enjoyed an unexpected success in the long term as the principal source for Scaliger's biography. Its immediate and intended effect was shattering in proportion as Scaliger's identification with his noble image was complete. The style of his scholarship – its vigour, freedom, panache and arrogance – was inherited from his father the very men of royalty. "Il n'y a Roy, ny Empereur qui est si belle façon que lui: Regardez-moy, je lui ressemble en tout & par tout, le nez aquilin."

It has seemed worth while to emphasize this side of Scaliger, for it is an essential part of the background to the main theme of Grafton's book, his intellectual and scholarly development. This can only be assessed in the context of the personalities and methods of European classical scholarship since the middle of the fifteenth century. The story begins with Angelo Poliziano, or, as I suspect he is still best known to Englishmen, Politian. (Grafton follows on on the whole acceptable middle course in the matter of proper names, though "the Manuzio" as a plural sounds odd to me; and "Turnèbe" is a figment.) It was Politian who formulated the methods and set the standards of critical enquiry for the next generation of scholars; and the story of Scaliger's intellectual formation is the story of his exposure and response to what they made of Politian's legacy. Grafton's preliminary appraisal of the work of Politian and his successors takes up nearly half the book and is an extremely valuable and original contribution to the history of learning in its own right. This complicated and interlocking narrative is unfolded lucidly and with a wealth of examples selected with discrimination from a vast range of sources, identified and usually quoted *in extenso* in the notes.

Scaliger was one of those minds which receive and improve more than they originate: "creative adaptation" is Grafton's description. His earliest work, the *Coniectanea* on Varro's *De Lingua Latina* (1565), is an astonishing display of linguistic and critical virtuosity for a man of twenty-four, recalling, though falling far short of, Bentley's *Epistle to Mill*. There followed, ignoring minor productions, the *Virgilian Appendix* (1573) – so christened by Scaliger and so known today – and his editions of Ausonius (1574), Festus (1575), Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius (1577) and Manilius (1579). Grafton's analyses of these works bring out sharply Scaliger's strengths and weaknesses as a scholar. He was impatient, sometimes slapdash – at the age of thirty-three he was, remarks Grafton, "still in a hurry" – and he was none too scrupulous about appropriating the work of others without acknowledging it; and above all he loved to show off. On the other side we find a flair for divinatorial criticism which remained until the advent of Bentley (unless Nicolaus Heinsius be also admitted as a contender) in a class by itself; and – what was more important because communicable – a grasp of the principles of what we now call, since German scholarship coined the term some two centuries afterwards, source-criticism, together with the will and the ability to translate them into practice. This is especially evident in the Festus, of which Grafton writes that "he placed all his sources, from Cato through Festus to Paulus and the glossaries, in a new and coherent historical perspective", and in the reconstruction of the lost necrology of the manuscripts of Catullus; but most of all in the edition of Manilius' *Astronomica*.

It is one of the ironies of the history of scholarship that this trivial farrago of true and false science, elegantly and inaccurately verified and bedizened with purple patches by a second-rate poet with an imperfect grasp of his subject, should have benefited from the attentions of three scholars of the calibre of Scaliger, Bentley and Hausman. Viewed absolutely as a contribution to the exegesis of Manilius Hausman's edition takes pride of place. Historically, however, Scaliger's work for all its manifold imperfections, is the most important, for it led ultimately to the *De emendatione* and the *Thesaurus Temporum*. Here the combination of Scaliger's classical and Near Eastern researches at last bore solid and permanent fruit. By placing Greek, Egyptian and Babylonian contributions to astronomy in their true relationship he prepared the way towards a comprehensive understanding of the history and chronology of the ancient world. This was not at all how the matter presented itself to him at the time. Grafton lets fall the curtain on his Act One with the hero bitterly frustrated by what seemed to him denial of recognition, depressed by the death of his patron and unable to face putting pen to paper. He could not know that his greatest achievements were yet to come.

Scaliger was, Grafton concludes, "all too human". Against the background of contemporary practices and attitudes, and when due allowance is made for the consequences of the terrible wrong inflicted on him by his father, his behaviour can be understood, even if it cannot always be condoned. His lapses in scholarship surprise because they are Scaliger's. Grafton occasionally gives him the benefit of the doubt when he does not really deserve it. No amount of special pleading can pass off his retranscription of Republican drama as anything but a *jeu d'esprit*. A more serious point arises in connection with his wholesale transpositions in the text of Propertius and Tibullus. The "one place of evidence" that Grafton produces in defence of this unhistorical proceeding will not wash. From Ovid's allusions to Tibullus in the second book of the *Tristia* Scaliger had inferred that in the text used by Ovid the order of the verses differed: from that in our manuscripts. This is totally fallacious. Ovid was not Nonius Marcellus, and no learned poet would condescend to anything so mechanical as incorporating his borrowings and allusions in exactly their original order. How Ovid laid Tibullus under contribution can be seen in *Amores* 3.9. Scaliger's argument came off the top of his head and should have been allowed to die at birth. An instance, then, of his frailty with which it is perhaps not inappropriate to end a notice of this first part of Grafton's fine characterization of a supremely gifted scholar and thoroughly mixed-up man.

Waving to Elizabeth

For Elizabeth Bishop

For mapmakers' reasons the transcontinental air routes must have been diverted today, and Sunderland's atmosphere is being webbed over by shiny almost invisible spider jets creeping with deliberate intention across the skin-like air, each suspended from the chalky silk of its passing. Thready at first, as if written by two, or four, fine felt nibs, the lines become cloudy as the planes cease to need them. In freedom they dissolve. Just as close observation dissipates in the wind of theory.

Eight or nine of them ooze, and all writing at once, rising from the south on slow rails, slow arcs, marmillary prevented by necessity from completing its evidence, but unravelling instead in soft powdery stripes, which seem to be the only clouds there are between what's simply here as park, house, roof, road, car, etc. and the wide long view they must have of us there, if they bother to look. They have taken so much of us up with them, too –

money and newspapers, meals, toilets, old films, hot coffee – yet the miles between us, though measurable, seem unreal. I have to think, "Here it is, June 19th, 1983. I'm waving from a waste patch by the Thornhill School." As perhaps you think back from your trip through the cosmos, "Here where I love it is no time at all. This geography looks wonderful. This high smooth sea's more quiet than the map is, though the map, relieved of mapmakers, looks imprisoned and free."

Anne Stevenson

Through the looking-glass

Alastair Fowler

HERBERT GRABES

The *Mutable Glass*: Mirror-inuagery in titles and texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance
Translated by Gordon Collier
414pp. Cambridge University Press. £35.
0 521 22203 6

From a high window a youth looks down on a diverse scene. In the foreground, a hog roots about among flowers, while three dogs hussy themselves with a recumbent woman beside an open sarcophagus full to the brim with human remains. In the background, a man sits at a table—of sort suitable for symposia—directing the attention of his audience to a lens-like object. The object on the table in this scene portrayed in an emblem of *Vain Beauty* by Jan David is a convex mirror. It is in fact the Mirror of Socrates. According to Diogenes Laertius, Socrates "would be always exhorting young men to view themselves in their looking-glasses, that if they saw themselves fair and comely, they might render themselves worthy of the beauty; but if deformed, that they might hide the defects of the body, by improvements of the mind." Chrysostom's parable of the hairdresser's mirror develops a slightly different double application of the mirror: comparison of the "real" image with our ideal allows us to request the hairdresser to make desired alterations. In one form or another, this corrective mirror seems to have persisted through the thinking, the metaphors, and particularly the didactic theory of two thousand years. Books were to be used to beautify or improve the inner self.

Metaphors of the mirror have played no small part in the development of thought. Indeed, the very words used to refer to the mind—operations—"reflect," "image" and to like—soon from an early date to have been imbued with suggestions of such metaphors. Yet Herbert Grabes contends in *The Mutable Glass* that it is the didactic rather than the epistemological function of the mirror that accounts for the extraordinary viability of the idea of man as a mirror during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Metaphysical applications were of course present, so to say, in the world of ideas. It may have been, for example, that the Neoplatonists substituted the mirror for Plato's metaphor of the shadow-cave for the reason that it is possible to have a mirror-image of a mirror-image (and so to argue with the notion of a hierarchy of gradations of being) in a way that is not true of shadows or shadows. The Neoplatonic metaphor still (or is it already?) appears in Dante's *Purgatorio*, where Eternal Goodness makes the angels "so many mirrors in which it is reflected".

In love poetry of the English and Scottish Renaissance we everywhere encounter the idea of the beloved as a mirror of transcendent beauty and virtue: "in her," Sir John Davies puts it, "as in a mirror clear, I see, and learn, far better things and more". Grabes does not deny that in this there may be some influence of Renaissance Neoplatonism. But he is inclined to be very cautious as to its extent, on the ground that mirrors of evil were also common, and would have to be explained on some other basis—which could then be used to explain the mirrors of beauty. But this seems to expect a kind of philosophical consistency that was utterly alien to most British poets.

The mirror is unexpectedly prominent in medieval, and Renaissance, passages concerned with perception—to such an extent as to become a regular attribute of personifications of Vision. This is because in the Augustinian theory of vision the eye operated as a mirror; the diffused soul present in the eye forming an image of the object. The mirror offered an effective metaphor of this process, since it is purely receptive, like the eye modified by light; since it shows an image only when confronted with an object; and since, it shows a good likeness. This conceals a double, and especially the vital distinction between the image in the eye and the resulting

inward image in the mind or heart—is indispensable information for the understanding of many conceited passages in Renaissance love poetry. It was compatible with both the Empedoclean introjective theory of vision, whereby objects emit rays, and the Euclidean extramissive theory, whereby the eyes emit radar-like rays. This compatibility was just as well, because love conceits would some times maximize complexity by mixing the two theories.

The improving mirror is by no means the only form the metaphor could take. There are encyclopedic mirrors, analytic mirrors, admonitory mirrors, flattering mirrors, satiric mirrors—"a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own"—and several sorts of fantastic and magical mirrors, showing distant objects, perhaps, or future objects. The range of applications of the metaphor is wide but not unlimited. Thus, God is a mirror in whom we may see our imperfections; and man (especially a king or a poet or a friend) is a mirror; and goodliness is; and the passions; and the Bible. But it seems that in English literature the world as a whole is not a mirror—a sign, perhaps, of our insularity? Professor Grabes says that the Bible is the only book believed to have both positive and negative examples. But that cannot be right. Even satire has some good examples; and so has drama—it is Skelton's *Sad Circumspicion* who says "A mirror encircled is this interlude, 'This life inconstant for to behold and see". Since Donatus, comedy has been a mirror, "speculum consuetudinis, imaginem veritatis".

The mirror itself could be made of water, or ice, or tears (sometimes frozen), or armour, or eyes (in Joseph Beaumont, it is formed of an extract made from eyes of famous tyrants and proud lovers). It was an attribute of Venus and (although not, apparently, in Britain) of Lullia; but also of Prudence and Sapience. It could deceive, or reveal the truth by discovering deceit. Its fleeting reflections could show the transience of life—or make the same point more finally by breaking. And yet not so: as Drayton and Donne discovered, the pieces were still mirrors and continued to reflect the beloved.

The most complex and interesting metaphors of the mirror developed in Renaissance love poetry, in which there was a fashion for ever more intricately mannaristic variations. Conventions quickly became familiar and were finessed on by combination,

inversion or other complications. To begin with, the woman was a mirror of beauty and goodness; or her eyes were burning glasses igniting the lover's heart with fires of love; or the eyes were a mirror of the heart; or the lover was reflected in the beloved's eyes physically; or the lover's heart mirrored the beloved's; or the beloved's eyes were mirrors of vision. And then all these conventions might be combined—as we find them in Spenser's nevertheless lucid *Amoretti* vii: "Fair eyes, the mirror of my mazed heart". The intricacies could also get out of control, however, as seems to have happened in "A Looking-Glass" by Thomas Carew (seldom the clearest of poets), where the beloved is illogically exhorted to stop looking in the mirror of the lover's frozen tears. Shakespeare satirizes such follies in *King John*, in the Dauphin's nimble metaphor-juggling:

The shadow of myself formed in her eye,
Which, being but the shadow of your son,
Becomes a sun, and makes your son a shadow.

All the long development of these metaphors of love's mirror seem to go back ultimately to the mirror of Narcissus, with its types of self-love and of love's inescapability. This remarkable possibility might be thought a matter of interest to anyone concerned with human sensibility; yet (almost as remarkably) it has not prompted Grabes to a single general observation.

A great part of *The Mutable Glass* is devoted to mirror imagery as it occurs in titles of the Middle Ages and Renaissance: an appendix of nearly 100 pages lists titles from the period up to 1700. Grabes's idea is to put the historical metaphors of Curious on a sounder methodological footing, by cutting a more regular shape. The titles are to offer an objective cross-section of mirror metaphors. Certainly the author's penchant for classification enjoys a free run: he is able to distinguish four categories, of encyclopedic or comprehensive mirrors (like Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum maius*), exemplary mirrors, prognostic mirrors and fantastic mirrors; together with many subclasses. Literature, however, is not a tidy array of classes, but rather a crowd of promiscuous families. Moreover, choosing titles as the sample proves to be a serious error. It is very far from being a representative sample; since during the Middle Ages titling was only beginning, and not yet used for all genres of works. Limited by

his determination to classify, Grabes hardly even explores the possibility that mirror titles were genre-linked, and constituted a claim to specifically didactic status. And he notes the replacement of mirror titles by anatomy titles in the seventeenth century, without reflecting on the sense that the anatomy was a specific genre.

Many incidental points of interest are to be found in the chapters expounding the content of common mirror metaphors. But all must stand or fall by its application in appropiating passages of literature; and in this, it must be said, Grabes only very occasionally succeeds. He easily identifies the conventions involved—but usually only to classify their deployment. To take but one example, he can discuss Hamlet's lines in the closet scene—"You got not till I set you up a glass / Where you may see the inmost part of you"—without any reference to the context. Yet it is highly germane to his own argument; for Hamlet proceeds to confront Gertrude with two exemplary images, out indeed literal mirrors, but framed images on the less: portraits of the elder Hamlet and of Claudius. Nor is our attention drawn to stylistic mirror motifs in the passage itself. Obviously enough, the third "you" reflects the second ("you may see . . . you"); less so, there is a secondary chain of discourse whereby Hamlet stands to get Gertrude herself up as a glass. But the mirror of style is not of much interest to Grabes.

One of the chief interests in metaphors is to trace changes that occurred during a period studied. Grabes makes a few points of interest in this direction. He suggests, for example, that the replacement of mirror by anatomy metaphors corresponded to the growth of a "more active and analytic relation to the object and to the world". One may agree with this, while wishing to add that the new metaphor often expressed the less radical and more aggressive stance of the merely superficial anatomist. Then, interesting correlations are drawn between changes in the material culture and metaphoric changes. The convex mirror of the Middle Ages was an apt vehicle for the inclusive, encyclopedic mirror metaphor. And in the Renaissance, "the dominating impulse" for the stronger force for mirror metaphors was "not so much a new and more 'reflective' mode of consciousness as a cultural change; namely, the improvement and cheap mass-production of glass mirrors by the Venetians."

But the most astonishing diachronic generalization advanced by Grabes—and one for which he has rightly been criticized—is that during the period 1200–1700 "no great changes in the world-picture can have taken place". His own evidence shouts loudly against this conclusion; as when his discussion of the eye as a mirror of love in Elizabethan literature shows a most profound alteration in sensibility. The ethos of late Petrarchism still had many neorealist and indeed self-centred features. Yet the greatly increased reciprocity in love is also very striking. And (to mention another, even greater change) there is the sharp increase in reflectiveness of thought during the Renaissance, which strikes everyone who thinks at all seriously about the development of the world-picture. A deep shift in the reciprocity of subject and object was in progress: a change large enough, in fact, to bring about the end of the allegorical tradition. It would be of my own view that it is this development, rather than any reduction in the price of Venetian mirrors, that we have to look for an explanation of the Elizabethan fashion for mirror metaphors. Since the older world-picture abounded in allegorical entities, it is scarcely an exaggeration to speak of its being replaced altogether in the seventeenth century—albeit by an anamorphic picture that at first was readable in very various ways.

Gordon Collier's translation is for the most part better than adequate; although he might to advantage have chopped up rather more of Grabes's dinosaurian periods into manageable sentences. But there are some errors; several of them arising from the common failure to appreciate that The German *England* is sometimes to be translated "Britain" (as "Scotland"). The present edition also footnotes into endnotes without page references. In such a way as to maximize inconvenience to the reader. The illustrations have deteriorated from the original edition, and are not well integrated with the text; yet they remain of absorbing if obscure interest. Nevertheless, this translation is to be welcomed; even if the welcome must be muted by a sense of shortcoming to the original. It has a great subject; but it is a great subject mislaid. *The Mutable Glass* offers a compendious mirror of much that is interesting in its field of vision, yet also an anamorphic mirror of how not to do an interesting, subject tedious by exhaustive and exhausting classification.

Author, Author

Competition No 136

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than September 9. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or falling that the most nearly correct—in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

1. Entries, marked "Author, Author 136" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on September 16.

1. Halélujah! was the only observation That escaped Lieutenant-Colonel Mary-Joe. When she tumbled off the platform in the station. And was cut in little pieces by the train.

2. Oh, about Salvation! It was good to see Kings and Princes by the Lamb set free. The banjo rattled and the tambourines Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of Queens.

3. "Thud, thud, thud. When, thud, thud, we see, thud, this face, thud, thud." There's a barefoot man gone on their steps, or I don't know nothing," said one. "And he ain't

never come down again. And his too was a bleeding."

Competition No 132

Winner: Stephen Cox

1. "Here's something to amuse you meanwhile — *The Times Literary Supplement*. The boy must have delivered it by mistake."

"As a matter of fact I ordered it," said Godfrey. "I hope you don't mind."

"Mind? Of course not, so long as you don't want to read me any of it (I would be quite like old times, I have) the dreary old rag for years."

Cyril Hare, *Thy Yew Tree's Shade*.

2. "— was not thinking about the murder."

Instead, he was smoking a cigarette and reading *The Times Literary Supplement* — nowadays refuted TLS, without even a full page after the "S" — one of three special issues given over to modern Albanian Poetry.

Edmond Crispin, *The Climax of the Moon*.

3. A short study of one of the Cavalier poets (Denham, Suckling, or Lovelace) — commissioned for a series of minor poets, was faxed with great industry by a reviewer (his sole one) in *The Times Literary Supplement*. In language so immoderate that on the whole, was able to laugh off the notice as a piece of academic pedantry. (Anthony Powell, *O. How the Wheel Becomes Ill*.)

Centripetal tendencies

Elie Kedourie

JOHN A. ARMSTRONG

Nations before Nationalism
411pp. University of North Carolina Press. £21.
0 8078 1501 2

In *Nations before Nationalism* John Armstrong wishes to inquire into the formation and persistence of ethnic identity. He concentrates on Europe and the Middle East and tries to specify the reasons why ethnic identity arises where it does, and persists where it does. The inquiry at first sight seems both feasible and reasonable. Why should we not ask, given sufficient evidence, answer the question when and how Hungarians or Turks or Arabs become aware of themselves as distinctive groups? Diversity and consciousness of it can indeed be specified and accounted for in its historical context, but is it really possible to go further?

Glory be to God for dappled things —
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;
For rose-moles all in suet upon trout that swim

Gerard Manley Hopkins itemizes and celebrates diversity. He does not seek to prove why dappled things are dappled, and why trout are shipped with rose-moles. It is otherwise with Professor Armstrong. He wants to dig deeper and deeper until he touches rock-bottom, and can then explain why Hungarians and Turks and Arabs exist — perhaps, in some sense, have to exist.

As he says in the penultimate paragraph of his book: "the reasons why such nations as the French, the

Spanish, and the Persian exist today is intrinsically important, the most important aspect of the book for many readers".

Armstrong's task will thus be seen to be quite arduous — some might say desperately so. In his quest for foundations and substrata he ranges far and wide. The ten pages of chronology which preface the book begin with "1250–1000 B.C. Jewish occupation of Palestine" and end with "1877 Russo-Turkish War". His chapter-headings invite us to compare the sedentary and the nomadic, Islam and Christianity, *Pólis* and *Patria*; to look into the *mythomateur* and the centralization imperative in imperial politics; to examine religious organizations and communication; and to consider language as code and communication.

The book, as may be seen, is nothing if not far-ranging. But perhaps in consequence its arguments become diffuse and unwieldy. Journeying with the author on the highways and byways of his research, the reader will undoubtedly come upon hitherto unfamiliar vistas, and view things from an unaccustomed perspective. He will, for instance, be led to reflect on the contrast between endogamy, prevalent in the Middle East, and exogamy, prevalent in the West. Exogamy, Armstrong suggests, is a consequence of the Christian prohibition on marriage between kindred, while endogamy reflects the Oriental's concern for genealogy, and for the preservation of honour in marriage. Exogamy, the reader is further invited to consider, runs counter to fixed genealogies and to a *patriotisme de caste*, while endogamy "was a powerful force for keeping identity focus on lineage rather than on territory, for providing superficial plausibility for the myth

that blood relationships . . . were decisive in human relations". May not this difference between exogamous and endogamous societies also be connected with the contrast between attachment to territory, so prevalent among West Europeans, and attachment to territory, so prevalent among West Europeans, and remained so characteristic of Middle Eastern society? The chain of evidence and inference linking marriage practices with ethnicity is however both long and doubtful. But it is considerations such as these which lead the author to conclude that "contrasting ways of life are so deeply anchored in group attitudes that differences in ethnic identities are almost inevitable".

There is no difficulty in agreeing that different ways of life are connected with different "group attitudes" and that some of these are indeed "deeply anchored". But there is nothing immutable in those attitudes. Before the Muslim conquest of the Levant, Egypt and North Africa these regions had seemed profoundly and immutably Christian, just as *romanticitas* and *Hellenism* had defined their ethos and governed their attitudes for many centuries before the coming of Christianity. The revolutions which these regions experienced when classical culture was supplanted by Christianity, and Christianity in turn replaced by Islam, were so far-reaching, that even though we assume biological continuity, to all intents and purposes they were entirely distinct groups which recognized no kinship, no affinity, no continuity with their putative ancestors. Human groups thus do change, and will continue to do so, sometimes quite radically, in their own estimation.

A group, again, defines itself by

contrast or opposition to other groups with which it is in contact, and here too change is, so to speak, a permanent condition. Great fluidity thus obtains in the make-up of human groups and in their view of themselves. Armstrong recognizes this to some extent when he writes at the beginning of his work that "there is no purely definitional way of distinguishing ethnicity from other types of identity". But, to go further, ethnicity itself and ethnic identities share in this fluidity. What, for instance, are Egyptians? For millennia, the inhabitants of the country of the Nile were the dumb and downtrodden subjects of the Pharaohs, the Ptolemies and the Romans. They then became, and looked upon themselves as, members of the Muslim *umma* ruled successively by Fatimids, Ayyubids, Mamelukes and Ottomans. An ambitious Ottoman governor, Muhammad Ali, carved out for himself an autonomous province the inhabitants of which very gradually came to look upon themselves as Egyptian. But even so the notion of an Egyptian remains to this day unstable. Territorial limits apart, was Egypt, as a country of the spirit, a part of Europe, as Khaled Isma'il wished to see it; or an entity with its own distinctive personality, as Egyptian thinkers between the wars believed; or is it part of the Arab nation, as both Farouk and Nasser urgently wanted it to be? It is little use to appeal, as Armstrong does, to the shape of Mameluke minarets in order to establish an Egyptian ethnic identity. What is true of Egypt is *mutatis mutandis* true of the French, the Spanish, the Persian and so many other nations.

One is led to make these remarks because slyly by side with this recognition of the difficulty of distinguishing ethnic from other identities, Armstrong entertains another, quite incompatible view. This view is encapsulated in the title of the book, which asserts that there were nations before nationalism. But this is well-nigh to have the present work no doubt meant that the bodies of

people which, since the spread of the relatively new doctrine of nationalism, have come to be called nations did indeed exist as such long before the doctrine. The word nation is of course much older than the term, or the concept, of nationalism; it is also clear that it did not have the meaning with which nationalism has subsequently invested it. That the opposite is Armstrong's view is apparent not only from his title, but also from many remarks scattered through the work. He thus declares at the outset that "widespread intense ethnic identification, although expressed in other forms, is recurrent". Of the view that "as early as the thirteenth century, a precocious Greek nationalism arose, leading directly to the kingdom of the Hellenes" we are told that it certainly has validity. We hear of the "intrusion" of diverse ethnic elements into medieval Eastern Europe. It is also argued that the Islamic world failed to utilize impartial administrations for building ethnic identity, but that on the other hand the Habsburg bureaucracy propagated a myth associated with a single linguistic vehicle which acquired the force of ethnic identity. All this smacks strongly of the Whig interpretation.

The work belongs to a genre, that of historical sociology, which may be said to have been invented by the authors of the Scottish Enlightenment, who were seeking the best of its practitioners. They sought to answer questions about the survival and cohesion of societies, and how they became different from one another. Bagehot, again, in *Physics and Politics*, produced a stimulating essay on those questions. And in our own day Norbert Ellsa's very different work illustrates how historical sociology can contribute to our understanding of the past. What distinguishes these works is a lightness of touch, an absence of fussiness, and a clear line of argument such that they serve to stretch the imagination and stimulate the mind. It would have been well-nigh to have the present work no doubt meant that the bodies of



SARDIS FROM PREHISTORIC TO ROMAN TIMES

Results of the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis, 1958–1975

by GEORGE M. A. HANFMANN

assisted by William E. Mierse

A great metropolis of the ancient world, "golden" Sardis was the place where legendary Croesus ruled, where coinage was invented. Since 1938 an archaeological team has been working at the site to retrieve evidence of the rich Lydian culture as well as of the prehistoric Anatolian settlement and the Hellenistic and Roman civilizations that followed the Lydian kingdom. Here is a comprehensive and fully illustrated account of what the team has learned, preserved by the eminent archaeologist who led the expedition. George Hanfmann and his collaborators survey the environment of Sardis, the crops and animal life, the mineral resources, the industries for which the city was famed, and the pattern of settlement. This history of Sardis is then reconstructed, from the early Bronze Age to Late Antiquity. Archaeologists who have done the excavating contribute descriptions of shops and houses, graves, the precincts of Altar of Artemis, the Acropolis, goldworking installations and techniques, the baths and gymnasium complex, and the Synagogue. The material finds are studied in the context of other evidence, and there emerges an overall picture of the Lydian society, culture, and religion, the Greek and subsequently the Roman impact, the Jewish community, and the Christianization of Sardis. 328 pages, 246 halftones, 47 line illustrations. August, 1983, £36.00.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF SARDIS: Other publications:
Report 2: Sculpture from Sardis: The Findings 1975, George M. A. Hanfmann & Nancy H. Ramage, 1978, £24.00.
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Monograph 7: Metalwork from Sardis: The Findings 1974, Jane C. Waldhaug, due October 1983, £30.00.

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Within and without the Pale

Bernard Wasserstein

M. C. N. SALBSTEIN

The Emancipation of the Jews in Britain: The Question of the Admission of the Jews to Parliament, 1828-1860

266pp. Associated University Presses, £15. 0-8386 3110 X

HAROLD POLLINS

Economic History of the Jews in England

339pp. Associated University Presses, £20. 0-8386 3033 2

E. J. BRISTOW

Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight against White Slavery 1870-1939

340pp. Oxford University Press, £15. 0-19 822588 1

IRENE ROTH

Cecil Roth: Historian without Tears 257pp. Sopher-Hermon, £10. 0-87203 103 9

W. D. RUBINSTEIN

The Left, The Right and The Jews 234pp. Croom Helm, £11.95. 0-7059 0204 2

The late Cecil Roth's *History of the Jews in England* was first published in 1941. In spite of the voluminous research which has been conducted since then on all aspects of Anglo-Jewish history, Roth's book (still in print) remains the best synoptic account of the subject. In retrospect, however, it suffers from one glaring fault. Roth begins with a discussion of the Norman origins of the Anglo-Jewish community; he proceeds through its medieval travails to the expulsion of 1290. After an interlude devoted to a characteristically affectionate portrait of the tiny group of crypto-Jews (*Marranos*) who found refuge in England after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal at the end of the fifteenth century, Roth's narrative moves in a gathering crescendo from the readmission of the Jews to England under Cromwell to the climax of his story, their emancipation in 1858. And there Roth ends. A brief coda notes that after 1881 the number of Jews in England more than tripled as a result of the great influx of refugees from Russia. But Roth does no more than remark that what he terms "the alambic of English tolerance" operated on these newer arrivals as on their forerunners and leaves it at that.

Emancipation was, of course, much more a beginning than an end; certainly any understanding of the contemporary Jewish community must be based more on the roots of the East and Central European immigrants of the past century than on the objects of Roth's attention. Moreover, as M. C. N. Salbstein remarks, the question is not merely "How did the Jews in Britain come to receive their Emancipation?" but also "What type of Emancipation was it that they eventually achieved?" It is a question which is posed more effectively than it is answered, for the bulk of Salbstein's book consists of a rather old-fashioned political narrative of the battle for the admission of Jews to Parliament.

Where Salbstein breaks new and fruitful ground is in his treatment of the internal conflicts within the Jewish community over the tactics to be adopted in the emancipation struggle. He shows that the community was far from united; indeed, not only over tactics but also over the very desirability of emancipation itself. Among the Jewish opponents of emancipation was the strange figure of Rabbi Joseph Crooll, teacher of Hebrew in Cambridge, who wore a curious, parchment-girdle bearing inscriptions from the scriptures and the Talmud. Between 1812 and 1829, Crooll wrote three books arguing the case against emancipation from an orthodox Jewish standpoint. Influenced by those central European rabbis who had urged their congregations to refuse Joseph II's *Toleranzpatent* as inconsistent with the

inherent redemption and restoration to Zion, Crooll insisted (in a letter which was read to the House of Commons in 1833): "Remember this, you can be no freeman except in the land of Canaan." Crooll predicted that the restoration of Israel would take place in 1840, the Jewish year 5600; he died in 1829.

Crooll's colourful eccentricity was of little importance save as additional ammunition for parliamentary opponents of emancipation. More representative and in many ways central to an explanation of the lengthy Jewish waiting-period after the emancipation of all other non-Anglican sects, was the attitude of the leading figure of the community, Moses Montefiore. Opposing those who urged a vigorous public campaign for the removal of all disabilities, Montefiore favoured a more piecemeal, gradualist approach. "We should accept all we can get," he wrote to the Rothschilds, arguing that too sudden an emancipation might tempt some of the newly freed away from the strict observance of their religion. To this extent he was drawing on the same fundamental idea as Crooll, albeit that the two men inhabited alien mental worlds.

Salbstein substantiates his argument that "one reason, if not the most important, for the initial failure to secure Emancipation lay in the conflict of aspirations to be found among the leaders and self-appointed leaders of the Jewish community". He lays due stress on the role of Disraeli as an advocate of the cause of Jewish emancipation, but he errs in dubbing him a "Marrano", which Disraeli (a convert in his youth) was neither by descent nor in a figurative sense. The Marranos were, above all, Jews who concealed their origins; no Jew flaunted them more than the author of *Tancred*.

It is perhaps a pity that Salbstein focuses primarily on the political and legal facets of his subject, if less so than most previous writers. The answer to his second question of what sort of emancipation was actually achieved could usefully have been conceived in broader terms. Salbstein follows Roth in ending with the immediate aftermath of the admission of Jews to the House of Commons.

Harold Pollins has a very different angle of vision. He devotes only a brief introductory chapter to the period before 1858. Given the extraordinarily rich documentation of the economic activities of Jews in medieval England one might have wished for more in a book with this title. The first third of the book deals with the period before 1880, the remainder with the great transformation wrought by the mass Jewish immigration to England thereafter. The earlier chapters, in particular, draw heavily on secondary sources. There is some useful analysis of Jewish occupational distribution and Pollins writes with insight and sympathy about the development of Jewish retailing, the chapters dealing with the middle class and with Jewish entrepreneurs are more predictable. A narrower focus on the Jewish working class might have yielded a more readable book. As it is one is left wanting to know less about the Clores and the Cohens and more about such exotics as the Sheffield Jewish Tailors' Sabbath Observance and Benefit Society and occupational diseases in the Jewish trades.

Occupational diseases and benevolent societies of different sorts loom large in the underworld explored by Edward J. Bristow. His panoramic survey of Jewish prostitutes, pimps and campaigners against vice is rightly international in scope. For like that other, underworld of revolutionary socialism, these were diseases that migrated across oceans and famed extraordinary intercontinental links. Not untypical was the case of the New York madam, Sadie Solomon, who was reported to have run disorderly houses in Johannesburg, Brazil, Buenos Aires, Panama, Texas and Vancouver. Occasionally the two internationalisms clashed head-on. In 1905 members of the Jewish socialist party, the Bund, launched an assault on the red-light district of Warsaw; the brawl degenerated into a full-scale riot which left eight dead and 100

wounded. In a similar incident in Buenos Aires in 1908, the socialist-Zionist, Nahman Syrkin, challenged the white slavers who were said to dominate the theatres, and pimps were forced out of the theatre by young Zionists. In a curious mirror-image of the Zubatovist police unions, the *Okhrana* around the turn of the century sought to use the underworld of vice to monitor and even to counter the other more menacing underworld of revolutionary agitation.

Bristow leaves us with a number of striking vignettes—the Jewish brothel-keepers who studied Talmud in provincial Argentina, the pretzel baker who became owner of a chain of brothels throughout east Asia, the Drucker family's brothel at Delagoa Bay in Mozambique, and many others. The names of many of the slaves and enslaved are evocative: Issy Cockroach, Mike Pike (vice king of the Chicago west side), Toothless Igg, Jenny the Factory, and others. The large number of terms used to denote pimps of some lexicographic interest: among them *pezewenks* in Constantinople, *maguetreux* in Portland, Oregon, *zushickers* in New York, and *alpones* in Warsaw—whence *Alphonserel*, *Alphonsepogram*, and, according to Mr Bristow, *ponce*.

Bristow places the phenomenon well in the context of the processes of rapid modernization, urbanization, migration, secularization, discrimination, and industrialization which were determining the lives of East European Jews between the 1870s and the 1930s. We are given vivid glimpses of the outlawed communities of Jews engaged in vice: the *Zvi Migdal* Society in Buenos Aires, the New York Independent Benevolent Association and other such bodies provided a full range of services to their members, including burial rights in cemeteries set apart from those of the rest of the Jewish community. Sometimes the sense of communal shame which led to the erection of these barriers in the case of women in death, as in the case of the earliest Jewish cemetery in Johannesburg, Braamfontein, where, we are told, the fence which formerly separated discredited individuals who

rented out property for immoral purposes was later removed.

The international range of the subject-matter and the inevitably incomplete biographies of the rapidly changing cast of characters lends the book an unfortunately disjointed and episodic character. Sometimes the author's enthusiasm for his subject seems to get the better of him, resulting in a literary style more reminiscent of *Tubbs* or the *Police Gazette* than is usual in publications of the Oxford University Press. Incongruously allied to this occasional descent into a "what-the-butler-saw" series of sexual cameos is the author's apparent embrace of the notion, popularized by some feminist historians such as Judith Walkowitz and Ruth Rosen, that prostitutes, rather than being passive sexual slaves, tended to be actors in history who chose prostitution voluntarily and rationally as a survival strategy. While this is perhaps true of some prostitutes, the evidence which Bristow himself presents suggests that in the main such an interpretation has more to do with the priorities of feminism in the 1980s than with the realities of Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement around the turn of the century.

In spite of these defects, Bristow's book is an original and valuable contribution to social history which ventures into an area that Jewish historians for understandable reasons have tended to avoid. The effort to overcome a tradition of defensiveness and apologetics is indeed a major feature of modern Jewish historiography. Cecil Roth was one of the pioneers of this professional, non-lachrymose approach to Jewish history and as Reader in Jewish Studies at Oxford, President of the Jewish Historical Society of England and Editor-in-Chief of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, his influence was pervasive. It was largely due to his efforts (and those of Lucien Wolf) that Anglo-Jewish history was saved from the twin dangers of genealogy and anti-Semitism. A serious assessment of Roth's life and work would be welcome. Irene Roth does not provide it. She cheerfully admits that she does

not wish to deal with her late husband's scholarly work. Instead she provides a biography of uxorious piety enlivened by some amusing anecdotes. What makes the book worth reading is not so much Irene Roth's mastery of the art of name-dropping, nobody worth mentioning seems to have been left out, from Eddie Cantor to Queen Mary.

The Jewish community that Roth knew continues to change. Latest estimates put the size of the Jewish population of Britain at no more than 385,000. The number of Jewish marriages in Britain is the lowest for more than a hundred years. In these circumstances of steady demographic decline (reflected in nearly all other Diaspora communities) the influence, especially the political influence, of Jews might be expected to decline also. W. D. Rubinstein argues that in fact the period since 1945 has been one of growth in Jewish political influence in most Western countries, arising from their disproportionate representation in the élites of countries such as the United States, Britain and Australia. The suggestion that Jewish voting patterns are now conforming more than in the past to socio-economic status (that is, Jews are moving to the right) appears to be borne out by several recent studies. But Rubinstein spoils his argument by pressing it too far and by discounting contrary evidence (particularly from the US). He dismisses the "falloccy" that Jews have a "natural affinity" for the political left.

The composition of Mrs Thatcher's new Cabinet (three Jews among senior ministers) might seem to bear him out. But notwithstanding recent suggestions to the contrary, there is probably not much of a distinctive and specific "Jewish vote" in any Western country. Even in the US, where ethnic voting is much more common than elsewhere, most Jews probably vote on other than purely ethnic grounds. Most of the signs suggest that in liberal democracies the "alambic of tolerance" is working towards a paradoxical conclusion: emancipation of the Jews and their loss of political (or any other) distinctiveness is leading to their fading away altogether.

Birth of the booth

Brian Harrison

B. L. KINZER

The Ballot Question in Nineteenth-Century English Politics 302pp. New York: Garland.

Lord Hugh Cecil, the witliest of British women's parliamentary champions, told Parliament in 1910 that voting was now "a serene tranquillity, an austere routine, and from beginning to end a thoroughly laudable occupation." And on June 9 this year, we all took it for granted that over thirty million people, voting-cards in hand, would make their way to the polls in sober and civic mood, almost as though going to church. Yet it has not always been so, and it is surprising that B. L. Kinzer should be the first historian to take the curiosity to ask how it all came about. Nor is his narrative without present-day significance, if only because some of the enemies of the ballot in the nineteenth century used arguments which have recently been refurbished for use against the idea of strike ballots.

Kinzer shows how the ballot had already become a powerful missile to hurl against the aristocracy by the 1830s. In the late 1830s the cause declined in the 1840s. It revived when the Ballot Society was formed in 1833, but declined again during Palmerston's supremacy, only to revive yet again in the late 1860s, when Gladstone mounted the campaign which forced it through Parliament against tenacious Tory obstruction. In 1872 Conservatives were almost unanimous against the ballot, whose surreptitiousness offended against the sense of public responsibility required of the voter and

against the openness of conduct expected of an Englishman. Here then is "another current. Conservative fashion with a respectable nineteenth-century Liberal pedigree."

Kinzer's well-documented, clearly written monograph joins that select collection of recent studies which show how nineteenth-century parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activists interacted: McCord on the Corn Laws, Shannon on Bulgarian atrocities, McHugh on state-regulated prostitution and Rosen on women's suffrage. Kinzer brings a subtle capacity for interpreting political motive and situation to bear. He is not primarily concerned with the situation in the constituencies or with the ballot's impact; it is the dynamics and the structure of the campaign for it that interest him. In this preoccupation Kinzer is once again topical—though it is doubtful whether this kind of historical literature will impinge on those historically conscious enthusiasts Livingstone, Tait and Scargill.

The leaders of the ballot crusade are portrayed as relatively ineffective, and the Ballot Society's significance is small by comparison with the impact of statesmen—whether through the retarding influence of Lord John Russell and Palmerston or the accelerating influence of John Bright and (after 1868) Gladstone. "The adoption of the ballot was very much an affair of high politics," Kinzer writes. In response to widespread popular demand? "There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that any such demand existed," he declares. The Ballot Act of 1872 originated in Gladstone's desire as Liberal leader to tempt John Bright into his ministry of 1868. Bright demanded the ballot as an entry-fee; hence the denouement of 1866-72 which takes up two-thirds of Kinzer's book. Perhaps the "high

politics" argument is a little overdone. While it usefully scales down the political significance of noisy people, such an argument takes too little account of the "low politics" involved in Gladstone's need to annex Bright, who would hardly have backed the ballot if it was not sufficiently popular in the country at large to strengthen the Liberal cause.

Kinzer does not aim to assess in detail the long-term impact of the ballot, but it is worth emphasizing in conclusion three respects in which it brought about as well as gain. Its advent helped to deprive general elections of their social and community dimension; politics and recreation were moving apart. Second, it deprived the Liberal Party of opportunities for informal primary elections; until 1872, no Liberals could stand as candidates in a constituency during the first hour of voting, at the end of which the Liberal running second could withdraw. Finally, Lord Hugh Cecil might have pointed out that feminists were capitalizing as early as 1873 on the new situation: the ballot had created. Women now had more reason to demand the vote because they could no longer scrutinize the voting behaviour of the men whose vote was exercised partly in trust for them. The ballot had also gradually removed a major objection to women voting on their own behalf; as their spokesman Jacob Bright emphasized, "a woman can now go to the polling booth and return from it with far greater ease than she experiences in making her way out of a theatre or a concert-room."

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STEPHEN JOHNSON

Late Roman Fortifications

315pp. Batsford, £37.50. 0-1154 3476 7

The Pax Romana did not explicitly forbid defensive walls to the towns and smaller settlements where dwell many of Rome's provincial subjects. In many cities walls, gates and towers survived to recall the dangers of past ages, but for a city to contemplate the expensive irrelevance of new walls and gates, probably to rivalry with its neighbours, was not likely to have been regarded favourably by the imperial authorities. The imperial capital itself had long spread beyond the walls built in the fourth century or to ward off the raids by Gauls, described in the noble pages of Livy's *Historiae*. Unwalled Rome, along with countless other cities in the empire, was, albeit unconsciously, imitating the famous example of Greek Sparta, whose citizens in arms would challenge any invader of their territory long before he could approach the unwalled city. It was perhaps a permissible exaggeration by the public orator, paying tribute to Rome in the reign of the good Antoninus Pius, to extol the universal prosperity of the cities, safe within the protective wall of the emperor's armies stationed far away in remote provinces. Wars were distant memories and many could hardly credit that they ever occurred at all.

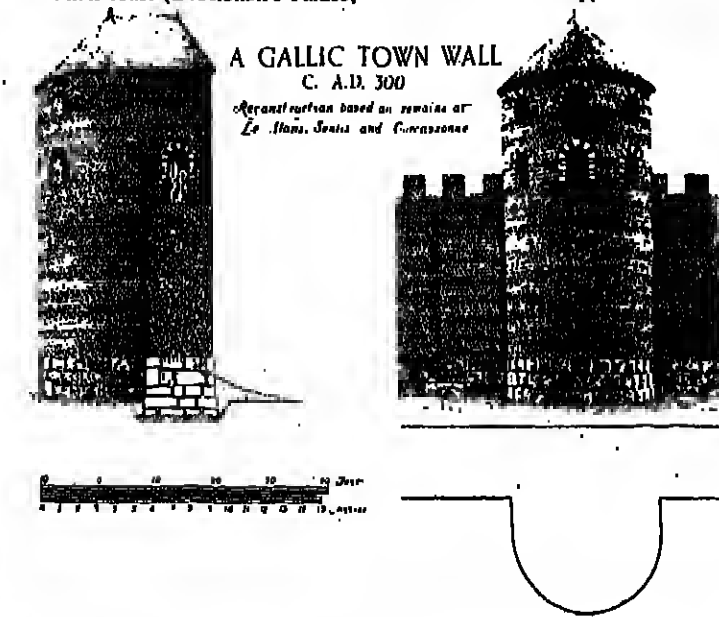
A few places still perhaps needed the protection of walls. In the time of Augustus, when the Roman army had no use for fortifications save a minimum level of earthen banks and timber palisades around its winter depots, colonies of ex-soldiers settled on the fringes of Northern Italy (Aosta, Turin and Ljubljana), in Southern Gaul (Nîmes, Autun and Vienna) and Spain (Barcelona), were provided with well-built stone walls and towers. In some cases with assistance from the emperor. Later, the veteran colonists settled by Claudius at Colchester in newly conquered Britain could not withstand the onslaught of the rebels under Boudicca. Blame for this disaster, observes Tacitus, lay with provincial governors who neglected the needs of defence in favour of amenities; and with the colonists themselves, who took no steps to construct a rampart or ditch: "david of precautions as though in time of peace they allowed themselves to be surrounded by a huge force of barbarians."

Stephen Johnson's splendid book describes the transformation of the unwalled empire, after barbarian invasions in the late third century AD, into a state whose government, cities, soldiers, and communications were protected by massive stone defences of every shape and size. From the North Sea to the Black Sea, the Rhine and Danube were held by a chain of frontier defences consisting of large fortresses, smaller forts, garrisoned watchtowers, observation posts and fortified landing jetties. Along both sides of the Channel, large new forts were built on islands to counter the increasing threat from seaborne raiders. The novelty of their thick stone walls, narrow gates and projecting towers for archers and artillery, can still be sensed by the visitor to such places as Burgh Castle near Great Yarmouth, Richborough near Sandwich, Portchester near Portsmouth and the reconstructed Cardiff Castle. In the European provinces most of the major cities soon acquired walls, as did also numerous small settlements along major roads and, perhaps more slowly, many hill-tops were fortified as refuges, especially in the hills behind the Rhine frontier and in the northern and eastern fringes of the Alps. It was a colossal effort of construction and the burdens which it imposed upon the provincial populations must have been nearly insupportable. Biggest of all were the defences ordered for the imperial capital by the emperor Aurelian in AD 271. The wall, built in brick-clay concrete by the guilds of the city, was nearly four metres thick and nearly eight metres high. The circuit of eighteen kilometres had eighteen gates

and 381 projecting towers. The largest single building project of antiquity, its great blank surfaces, brooding over the frantic traffic of modern Rome, still convey that sense of insecurity which ended centuries of confident urban growth.

Through numerous plans and maps (though with a rather disappointing selection of illustrations, where some aerial views might have been instructive) Dr Johnson first catalogues and offers classifications of the new designs in fortification. Thus gates are divided by the variety of projecting towers which flanked them, U-shaped, square or rectangular and polygonal. The last category should comprise examples from the Dalmatian coast (Diocletian's Palace,

the reigning sons of Constantine (AO 337-40) proclaim that "the place on the frontier line almost most tempting to the aggressive instincts of the Gothic peoples the emperors have shut off through the construction of fortifications for this depot so as to ensure the everlasting security of their provinces, and they have also restrained the attacks of local brigands through an arrangement of permanent defence works". Similar proclamations have been found attached to even the most modest constructions on the banks of the Rhine and Danube. Within the empire some cities were helped to construct their walls by the emperors, for reasons which are not always clear to us. Otherwise self-help and local initiative appears to have



A reconstruction drawing of a Gallic town wall, based on surviving examples at Le Mans, Sens, and Carcassonne; from the book reviewed here.

been responsible for the defences of many cities, after the example of Athens, that much favoured University town. After the nightmare of an attack by the Huns in 267 the citizens set to and built a wall of stones taken from existing buildings to enclose the Acropolis and some Roman buildings to the north, but not its historic agora.

Elsewhere the story may have been different, though the result, in respect of the areas enclosed within the new walls, was similar to the Athenian effort. The cities of Gaul had grown in prosperity in the centuries of peace since Caesar's conquest. When the Germans poured across the Rhine in 275-6 most of the cities were unprotected, though the precise extent and nature of the ensuing disaster remains hard to gauge. It does seem clear, however, that after this invasion many of the cities in Gaul were provided with walls, with narrow gates and projecting towers in the latest fashion. They were well built with a solid core faced with freshly cut small stone blocks and an extensive use of brick for window-sill courses and bonding courses. In several places the walls were built upon a base of larger stones, many removed from earlier buildings.

The surviving remains suggest that there was a concerted programme of defence construction, particularly in northern and central Gaul. What is most striking is that many of these new walls enclosed only a small area at the centre of the existing city. Sometimes the theatre and amphitheatre were deliberately brought into the circuit to serve as monumental fortresses. It may be that these Gallic cities (for that is what many of them are) could serve as a refuge for the city population when danger threatened; but one must agree with Johnson that the effort and organization which caused them to be scored through the central blinks of large cities was the consequence of an imperial order that the essential fabric of government must be safeguarded. The political and social consequences are likely to have been more lasting and profound than the effects of the invasions which brought them into existence.

If the principal officers of local and central government could, like the army, bolt into the protection of a secure fortress when they were there to give a thought for the rest, not to

mention the rural peasantry? Once the reliance upon walls had permeated the policies and attitudes of the governing classes then all the other groups in society will have determined to seek their own security in similar fashion. Soon not only the major centres were walled but also many small settlements along the principal roads were similarly protected to ensure security of movement between the major centres of government. It is not unreasonable to see in the hill-top fortifications, none of which is known to have been an "official" construction, a counter to the protection of cities and main roads by those who, by reason of status or geography, were left outside the walls. For those who dwell in the settled areas behind the Rhine and Danube frontier the new policy of selective fortification must have appeared a cynical capitulation from the ideal of the Pax Romana described by Aristides a century before.

The resulting ubiquity of local defences, which is the most notable characteristic of the Roman Empire of the late third and fourth centuries, is well demonstrated in this comprehensive archaeological survey. Not the least of the book's merits are the many questions of purpose Johnson poses and the gaps in our knowledge he reveals. What actually did go on inside some of these fortresses, both military and civil? That distinction itself is hard to make, especially when there is an absence of instructive internal buildings. Who was permitted to enter and who was not? Disappointingly, the author offers little by way of wider historical consideration after his great labour of compilation. A concluding chapter promises something on "social reaction" and "grass-roots response" to the spread of fortification but we are soon presented with the highly questionable pronouncement that the provision of town and city walls within the empire "was a great boost to Roman morale". The work then concludes with a chronology and summary of fortification construction during the late third and fourth

centuries: all very useful but rather predictable after the detailed surveys of individual provinces and frontiers.

The construction of lasting defences was not completed through a short spell of intensive effort. As we can see from several overviews of the walls of Rome in the fourth and early fifth centuries, repairs and improvements were a continual burden on the local population. As long as the emperors, their courts and the landowning families came to the frontier provinces and needed the protection of defences, the walls could serve to preserve much of the fabric of Roman provincial society. By the early fifth century, with the emperor Honorius safe behind the marshes which surround Ravenna, the Germans crossed the Rhine once again, but this time, like the Goths who crossed the Danube a generation earlier, they were not made to return. Now many sought the security of a hill-top refuge, probably under the protection of some local leader, as much against the rapacity of government officials as against barbarian raids. The most remarkable recent inscription carved in the rock of a defile which led to an upland valley in the Maritime Alps near Sisteron. Along with his wife and brother, Claudius Postumus Dardoune had a road cut through the gorge and fortified the place with walls and gates for the common protection of local people.

Dardanus, a probably Christian, named the place "God's City" (Theopolis). A talented lawyer who had risen to high imperial office in the West, he had already devised his mountain retreat before he received, in AD 414, from St Jerome a long letter of instruction regarding the Promised Land. That great scholar of the Scriptures once observed that the Romans of old, though they believed themselves to be immortal, built in modest fashion, but that those of his day put up buildings to last forever even though they expected death tomorrow. The peculiar truth of this claim can now be fully understood through the late Roman fortifications described in Stephen Johnson's book.

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Preaching and teaching

Michael Ramsey

OWEN CHADWICK

Hensley Henson: A study in the friction between Church and State
337pp. Oxford University Press.
£18.50.
0 19 826445 3

Among Anglican churchmen of the present century Herbert Hensley Henson was outstanding as preacher and orator, as controversialist and man of conscience and as one whose gifts of wit and learning were blended with the sympathy and understanding of a pastor. In his old age, with failing judgment, he published three large volumes of *Retrospect*, and friends who had known him best felt that these volumes gave a distorted picture through passages of irritable self-justification and caustic criticism of contemporaries. Indeed R. A. Butler, who had admired Henson and learnt much from him, went so far as to say "the autobiography shattered my admiration for the man". A biography has long been needed and Owen Chadwick has given us one in which *Retrospect* is set in the perspective of much firsthand testimony about the man and of a wider historical context. There cannot be many biographies in which the story of the man and the history of his times more fascinatingly illustrate one another.

The story begins with a childhood unhappy and frustrated. The mother died in Herbert's infancy, the father was a fanatical sectarian determined to bring up the children uncontaminated by the taints of the world. No fun, no friendships, no school education. So Herbert grew up lonely and thwarted, but devoted to books. When he was thirteen his father married again and the stepmother, a German lady named Carlissima, cared for Herbert, enabled him to go to school, though not a good one, and eventually to go up to Oxford as a non-collegiate undergraduate. Herbert lived very lonely in his lodgings, but he worked hard and won a First Class in the Honours School of History, and a Fellowship at All Souls followed. Indeed life began for him with, for the first time, the happy companionship of friends and colleagues, including some who were to be eminent as statesmen, divines and academics. Christian influences, of a kind very different from his father's, stirred Henson at the time, and among these was Charles Gore at Pusey House. Ordination followed, and very soon the post of Vicar of Barking, where Henson had some strenuous years of pastoral work. It was work of a broadly Tractarian kind, without ritualism but with the teaching and practice of sacramental confession

which meant much to Henson at the time.

The turn of the century had seen the first of the big changes of outlook which occurred in Henson's ministry. He had come to a deep dislike of the Catholic conception of the Church, whether Roman or Anglican, partly through the process of his own studies and partly through revulsion at the Dreyfus episode. So when in 1900 Lord Salisbury nominated him to be Canon of Westminster and Rector of St Margaret's on the strength of his now considerable gifts as a preacher, he entered upon a vigorous preaching ministry in which two themes were prominent: fraternity with the Nonconformist Churches, and a liberal interpretation of the Creed such as did not regard the literal acceptance of the virgin birth and the empty tomb as essential for belief in the divinity of Jesus. It was a powerful ministry not afraid to step into contemporary prophesy, as when Henson denounced by name the directors of the Peruvian Amazon Company for the horrible cruelties practised on those who worked for the rubber trade in Peru. Rejecting Asquith's offer of the Chair of Ecclesiastical History in Oxford, Henson completed twelve years at Westminster and moved on to be Dean of Durham from 1912 to 1918. The North was new to him and he quickly got its "feel" and never lost it, while he continued the same main themes of preaching and teaching, adding to them the righteousness of the Allied cause in the war with warnings against jingoism and a spirit of revenge, and throughout maintaining his conviction that the state establishment of the Church of England should be upheld as in the past.

The story of the "Hoford Scandal" has been written, judiciously by Archbishop Davidson's biographer, and with some emotion in Henson's *Retrospect*. Chadwick gives a deeper and wider picture of the attitudes and motives of those involved in the controversy as well as an interesting glimpse of Lloyd George's crude handling of church matters, for example not writing letters of the highest importance but delegating them to the secretary who a little later became notorious in connection with the sale of honours.

Lloyd George was right in believing that Henson should be a bishop, but was the man of Harking and Westminster best choice for the very real see of Hereford? The nomination stirred a storm on account of Henson's alleged heresy concerning the Creed, the protest being led by Bishop Gore of Oxford. Promoted by the Archbishop, Henson wrote a "statement" in which he affirmed his sincere acceptance of the Creed, the protest was withdrawn and Henson's consecration followed; but he was deeply wounded by the controversy and many bishops absented themselves from the ceremony. Through the subsequent years Henson remained a convinced believer in the divinity of Jesus Christ and a powerful exponent of that doctrine, while he claimed that his assent to the two creedal miracles was in symbolic and not literal terms. After two happy years in the see of Hereford, Henson was translated to Durham in 1920, and for twenty years the signature "Herbert Henson" was known far and wide.

In the 1920s Henson was surrounded in Durham by the miseries of industrial unrest, and he reacted by a very caring and active sympathy for people in distress and a vehement hostility to the weapon of the strike and to "socialism". The first of these attitudes was proved by his own vigorous attempts to bring and encourage relief to the distressed, the second was rewarded by the image of a bigoted capitalist. Henson suffered much and, as was often seen, won both abuse and affection.

Distance meant that Henson's attendance at the House of Lords was infrequent. But he made there a series of memorable and trenchant speeches. Chadwick probes most interestingly into Henson's modes of oratory. While he conscientiously insisted on writing every word of his sermons to full, his best speeches to the Lords and elsewhere were often made when he was ill-prepared or had lost his notes. He supported A. P. Herbert's bill for the reform of the law of divorce, claiming that the reform would "relieve a great many broken homes, and enable many children to enjoy a domestic life and causing a bit of stir by criticising Archbishop Lang's views on the biblical passages concerning marriage and divorce. When the 1930s came Henson soon

found himself impelled to speak on foreign as well as domestic affairs. He was moved to the depths by Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia, and his last speech in the Lords was an impassioned plea that sanctions against Italy should not be abandoned. If he seemed very lonely in the Lords in the passion of this speech, a similar plea was being made in the Commons by Harold Macmillan, who lost the party whip for making it. As to Hitler, Henson was among the first to be vigorously critical of appeasement, and here for a time his targets were fellow-churchmen who wanted to go slow in supporting the German Confessional Church in its struggle against Nazi doctrine. In this Henson was at odds with his old friend from All Souls, Arthur Headlam, and throughout his life he could combine unaltered personal friendship with controversial disapproval. We find Charles Gore writing to him as "Beloved wretch", and he says of Headlam, "I have likened him to a Brezil nut, repulsive in the exterior and sound in the core".

On these and other political issues Henson's attitudes were fairly consistent and predictable. The volte-face, which startled so many, was on the issue of Church and State after the rejection of the Revised Prayer Book by the House of Commons in 1927. Between the vote in the Commons on December 17, 1927, and Henson's sermon to the University of Cambridge on January 24, 1928, the stoutest upholder of Establishment had become the Disestablisher, the role in which he continued rather lonely for the rest of his life. Here, while many have been perplexed, Chadwick is illuminating. He shows that it was sometimes Henson's way, while upholding a particular conviction, to be thinking deeply and self-critically about its validity, delaying a change of stance until he was really sure. In this case Henson had been quietly wondering whether the union of Church and State could survive the coming of a society largely secularized in attitude, and he was naively ready to suppose that "the winning of God" would go together. The biography shows Henson not as one who rapidly and dramatically changed his mind but as thinking critically about his own beliefs, and sometimes after much silent rethinking taking the world by surprise.

The later years of the Durham episcopate saw Henson drawing much upon early experiences and convictions. The Barking vicar seemed to be coming into his own. Henson criticized with horror the evangelistic movement led by Frank Buchman and known as the Oxford Group, with its practice of public confession and sharing. He felt that the methods were dangerous and that such eccentricities slowed the need for the Church to have a deeper hold upon its own spirituality and pastoral tradition. While he still disliked contemporary Anglo-Catholicism he found himself near once again to some of the Tractarian ideals and, as in his early ministry, he commended the practice of private confession and absolution. Of his many writings, neither the volume of sermons nor the *Gifford Lectures*, *Christian Ministry*, have lasted beyond his lifetime, though the two books of Charges to those to be ordained, *Church and Parish in England* and *Ad Clerum*, seem sure of a lasting place in Anglican literature. No part of his episcopal office did Henson give more care than the selecting, knowing and advising of the candidates for ordination, for the practice of delegating this part of the bishops' office to committees, in theory advisory and in practice dictatorial, had not yet begun. When Henson retired from the bishopric at the age of 75, the diocese thanked him for "a great and generous episcopate".

The story ends with the years of retirement in a Suffolk village, after a very brief period as a Canon of Westminster once again, at the time when the bombs were falling. In his rural retirement some failures of judgment caused the *Retrospect* to contain something of earlier mental agonies and depreciations of other men. Failing health, however, did not prevent him from taking charge of the parish and its services for a whole year, and looking back at some of the country persons whom he advised greatly he would think specially of Dean Church. His wife Ella and their devoted friend Feme Barker cared for him. Often regarded as the "odd man out" Henson is seen, in Owen Chadwick's biography, as one who consistently strove to find Christian answers in a world "odd and out".

Trusting to the Fathers

John Drury

ANDREW LOUTH
Discerning the Mystery: An Essay on the Nature of Theology
150pp. Oxford University Press.
£12.50.
0 19 826657 X

Theology, even in a lacklustre phase, is an ambitious subject. It looks for wholeness, for a unity in everything. That basic conviction about its nature runs strongly through Andrew Louth's *Discerning the Mystery*. He sacrifices a lot for it. The practical trouble is that, even in the limits of Christian theology, the search has been going on for so long and in so many diverse cultures and phases, that the unity gets harder and harder to find in the *embarras de richesse*, not to mention the junk, which it has left.

Louth relieves this difficulty by spectacularly drastic cuts. The Reformation, the Enlightenment and Romanticism have to go. They were "meant to" lead theology away from the heart of the subject, have "sworn it along by the currents of the day" by methods which, however successful in the natural sciences, cause havoc in theology by calling tradition into question instead of accepting it with substantive wonder. Louth's Christianity is historical criticism, in (backward) and is the lost world of unity inhabited by the Church Fathers. It is the inmost fibre of his theological being to be *laudator temporis acti*. He tries to relax the muscles of historical criticism by injections of Gide's hermeneutic philosophy. With it he

sleep he can get back to the patristic Eden. And having got there he flings back inside at the giant whose power seems to have escaped. Time and again after the long quotations, the interpretations of how Torrance interpreted Barth's Dortmund lectures, of what do Lubac makes, of what the Fathers made of scripture, and so on, Louth pops up above the hermeneutical undergrowth to denounce modernity.

He could be right to do so. Most modern theologians feel this "Most modern" the sound of critical consciousness grating against the bottom of their pants to give him a hearing. If his way works it is worth the steep cost. But it does not. The people he likes are presented too much like junks; those he dislikes are too much caricatured.

In the first place, the modern authorities approvingly quoted do not get shot of the way they live now, and back to Byzantium anything like as clearly as Louth thinks they do, and so the regressive journey begins to look like a Vestalian reverie rather than a practicable deliverance. The long citations of Irenaeus and Congar which face one another on pages 84 and 85 are supposed to match but don't. Irenaeus speaks of the "incomprehensible" divine authority of the Christian Church in a way which defies application to any other body. Congar speaks of the "interdependence of living in tradition in a way which invites any number of such applications. Likewise, T. S. Eliot establishes the "legitimacy" of a Christian interpretation of Virgil because, "the writer is, ultimately something which he does not wholly understand". But that is a world away from what Louth wants to do in the

chapter concerned: re-establish the allegorical interpretation of scripture which Old Testament prophets were speaking of. Christian revelation, full and complete, allows a modern Jewish or atheist interpretation just as much as an orthodox Christian one. And this is not made clear.

Louth uses arguments which favour traditions to endorse one tradition exclusively. And that transforms pleading into special pleading. It distorts his view of historical criticism. He sees it as an obsession with method, an logorrhythmic aping of science. He falls to do justice to its attempt to do intellectual justice to the other religions, cultures and theologies brought into view by the expansion of Europe and the lengthening historical perspective. To take one of his examples, there may have been too modern discoveries about the New Testament, though it is a big claim and almost certainly false, but there have been discoveries like the Dead Sea Scrolls which show New Testament ideas vigorously alive elsewhere than in the Church. And that does something irreparable to the old notion of their uniquely revealed holiness in Christianity. Louth notices the "historical biblical critics' enthusiasm for the past". Though they are so like him in this respect, he still cannot forgive them. For they saw "all ages as equally important, equally immediate to God" and he sees such immediacy in much more restricted focus; temporally and spatially. Also, they were ready to criticize all traditions alike, and find "wrong-headedness" in them as a discipline which Louth disavows: "into 'being them all as false'. Their appreciation

of the past does not excuse them, because it included negative criticism of the Christian past. Nor does their fervour for *Bildung* (which Louth also shares), in historical writing or *Bildungsroman*. Could a modern Christian historian seriously take the Acts of the Apostles as a paradigm of his art? What would a miracle do to *Emma?*

This book is a defence of miracle, mystery and authority, a bouquet for the Grand Inquisitor. If Louth had shown more sense of the virtues of his enemies, not least their intellectual charity, it might have been something more useful. As it is, it suffers from the missing link in its vivid reasoning. No persuasive reason is given for commandeering arguments for traditions in general on behalf of one tradition only. To a plural religious world, that is a serious omission which no exhortations to trusting submission to orthodox dogma can cover.

Two hundred years ago, J. J. Griesbach changed the direction of New Testament studies by suggesting a comprehensive solution to the problem posed by the similarities and differences between the first three Gospels. He proposed that Matthew was written, first, Luke next, and Mark last, using both the others. For the past hundred years, this theory has been widely out of fashion and Margal priority has ruled, but recently it has won powerful scholarly support. In *The Revival of the Gospels* (250pp. Cambridge University Press, £18.00 521 29803 X), Christopher Tuckett gives a critical appraisal of this movement and finds Griesbach waiting.

The fruits of putrefaction

Anne Duchêne

JOANNA RICHARDSON

Colette
276pp. Methuen. £12.95.
0413 48780 6

Joanna Richardson says in the introduction to *Colette* that her book is "the first full-scale biography of Colette in English". The jacket calls it "the first serious full-scale biography of Colette to be written in English". This is presumably to establish its distance from such smaller studies as those by Elaine Marks, Margaret Crosland and Yvonne Mitchell, who could not make such claims, though they did try to establish some degree of critical perspective, which this book refrains from doing. What "scale" is being used? It is an odd word, and bothersome.

There seem to be two reasons for the claim. One is the "practical help" Richardson received, in conversation and letters, from Colette's two stepsons, Bertrand de Jouvenel, the son by his first marriage of Colette's second husband, Henri de Jouvenel (here called "Henry"), though no other names are Anglicized, and Renaud de Jouvenel, Henri's natural son by one of his mistresses, the Comtesse de Comminges. "They have, between them," the introduction gratefully records, "added a new dimension to this book."

Bertrand de Jouvenel, now over eighty, admits having become his stepmother's lover in 1920, when he was seventeen and she was forty-seven. ("There has long been a tradition in France that young men are initiated by their mother's friends," the author explains. *Chéri* was published in 1920, but before their meeting. The relationship lasted three years, until the de Jouvenel divorce. It is never recalled here with anything but gentleness, admiration and gratitude; and the biographer's tone also softens; whenever this is her witness.

By contrast, the memories of Renaud de Jouvenel, in his late seventies, are in harsh dissenting counterpoint to the prevailing mythology: earth-mother she may have seemed to others, but as a teenager Colette as a rotten wife, a rotten mother to her only daughter, a

loyal and modest man; and last, the arthritic apothosis in the rue de Bessolais, with a *morituri*, the "admirable and adorable" Maurice Godéau.

A sense of any "scale" is very soon lost, in all this, for the ordinary reader who must, in a book as devotedly documented as this one, either decide whether to concentrate hard on the elusive central current in the life, or to succumb to all the crackling and rustling and distraction of the quotations. (Distraction is compounded, of course, when those quoted are predominantly French literary, culturally groomed to be aspiring and self-aware, and so never making entirely reliable witnesses, the funerary tributes at the end almost carry the book away on a high tide of hyperbole, from which one would like to rescue Colette's salute to "a wise woman who... refused none of the fruitful putrefactions of life", and whose fame grew "slowly and obscurely, as on the straw of a manger".) Colette emerges most clearly in the 1930s, when she was standing alone in her maturity and fame, but was always very worried about money. The great talent was then turned to writing all kinds of publicly material for cigarettes and wines and cosmetics, and the subtitles for American films, and "rather brushwood which helps me to kindle my fire", as she herself put it. What one critic called her "terrible love of money" ("It's because I abominate it that I want to shut up as much of it as possible", she told her publisher) can be ascribed, Richardson agrees, to childhood experience of thrift and her father's ruin; but she also needed money simply to maintain the houses by the sea, the fruits, the wines, the flowers and the animals which restored her, like Anteaux, to earth.

The reader may still, if not for "full-scale" certainties, find himself with many questions. Some are small: why, for instance, is Léon Hamel, the early confidant, shadowy? Why no allusion to the suicide of Colette's sister? More widely, how did the collaboration work with Léon Marchand, in transferring the novels to the stage? How was *Chéri* distributed, for instance, among four acts, without benefit of the sustaining prose? Why does the author over advance her own (or any) general view of the evolution of Parisian society during Colette's

lives? Why does she say Colette's reactions to the fall of France in 1940 are "strangely unmoved and unmoving" but not allow us to see any, when so much that is trivial is so abundantly recorded? (Even, a querulous nationalistic query: if Willy's illegitimate son Colette's third stepson, loving and overlooked - was certain her only visit to England, to see him in school, coincided with Mafeking night in 1900, why did Colette later tell Peter Quennell her only English visit was to a haunted castle by the Thames, and James Lees-Milne that it was as guest of an Anglo-Indian colonel who only spoke to his dog, and then in French?)

None of which, in relation to the books we have, matters a jot. The unity of Colette's life lies in her writing; but this is not a critical biography, and never seeks to analyse that essence. This is sad, because it is in the writing that Colette seems, paradoxically, most natural, and honest, and least an artefact of the subtle, narcissistic pressures of Parisian publicity which exalted her into a *monnaie sacrée*. She fell in with these pressures with keen compliance, and played the seipent of old Seloe with gusto, of course; but her peculiar potency lies always, however perversely or unexpectedly, in the assertion of health and goodness, over and against and beyond putrefaction.

Colette caricatured in wood (dressed and nude up), advertised for sale in *La Vie Parisienne*, May 9, 1908 as one of seventeen such models.

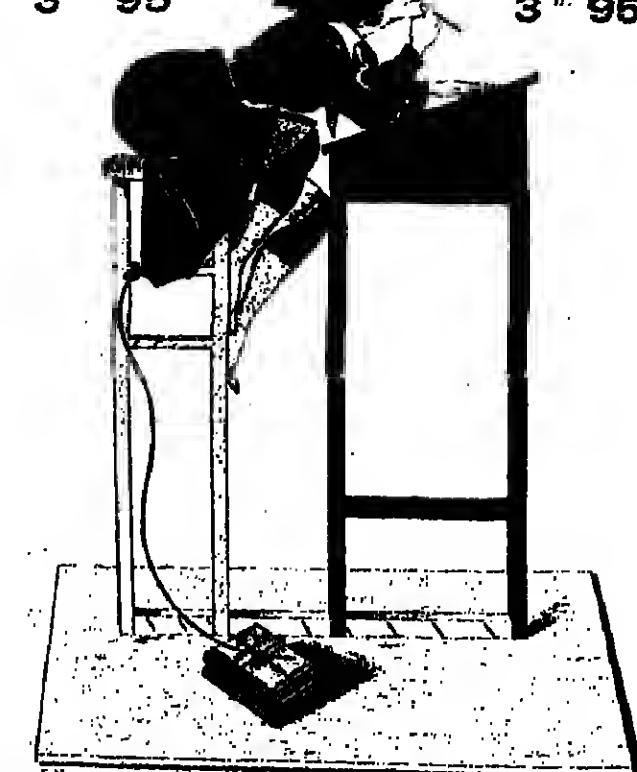
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Colette caricatured in wood (dressed and nude up), advertised for sale in *La Vie Parisienne*, May 9, 1908 as one of seventeen such models.

The logic of decadence

Marlinda Warner

MICHEL TOURNIER

Gilles et Jeanne
140pp. Paris: Oallimard. 49 fr.
2 07 024269 2

Gilles de Rais was about twenty-five in 1429 when Joan of Arc arrived in Chinon, he had pledged himself that year to the party of Georges de Selve, the favourite at court, and had been created, in spite of his youth, Marshal of France. He was the heir to immense fortunes from large estates in Brittany and Vendée, amazed by his grandfather, the miser and ruffian Jean de Craon, whose only son had fallen at Agincourt. With the Duc d'Alençon, Gilles de Rais was given command of the armies at Chinon, in the spring campaign that led to victory over the English besiegers, and made Joan of Arc the champion and saviour of France.

In August, Gilles rode with the King and Joan through Champagné to the conclusion: Jo Reims: cathedral: it was he who brought the Holy Christ in the Sainte Ampoule to the ceremony, from its shrine in the Abbey of Saint Rémy. Later, during Joan of Arc's trial, he remained her only. They fought together to storm Paris in September, but failed when neither the King nor the inhabitants gave them the support they had hoped for. When Joan fell, wounded in the thigh, in the month that had been filled in for the ransom, she called on Gilles to come to help her or so one of the chroniclers writes. It was Gilles who suggested

a raid deep into English territory, perhaps to rescue her after she had been captured, but this is not certain. The mystery played him in Orleans four years after her death celebrated the town's heroine with lavish display and was paid for - at huge cost - by Gilles, who also figured in it very prominently and well. He was a profligate who, once he had come into his inheritance, spent so fantastically that the King placed him under an interdict; in an era of extreme refinement and aristocracy combined with ruthlessness, he presented a characteristic mixture of aestheticism (he kept a boy's choir and patronized music churches and convivia, generously, and of course cruelty. For Gilles de Rais is most notorious as a prototype of Bluebeard. The Opies have traced this folk tale back to an earlier source, also Breton, and it may well have influenced local perceptions of Gilles de Rais's crimes in his time, as well as the tradition that developed about him later. Today, the tomb of his daughter Marie, in Notre-Dame de Vitre, is still pointed out to visitors as that of Bluebeard's child.

That Saint Joan of Arc should have accepted as a teenager, perhaps even as a friend, a man who nine years after she died in 1431 confessed to the sexual violation and murder of over a hundred children and was hanged and burned after an inquisition trial more sordid than her own, constitutes a historical surprise that has inspired many writers. Michel Tournier, in this new, very slim *récit*, follows the known biographical facts with surprising fidelity, but fulfils the promise of his publishers to read between the lines by giving them a decadent *aveux*. Where previous

authors have seen paradox in Joan of Arc's association with Bluebeard, Tournier sees a certain logic. His Joan is responsible for Gilles de Rais.

Tournier despatches the living Joan in a brisk forty pages. Gilles seizes her at Chinon, and experiences a *coup de foudre*. She is everything he has always desired, a young girl who is at the same time a woman (and one with green eyes) and a saint, haloed in light. They become friends, after she has described her visions and her mission in words taken straight from the trial. When Joan falls before Paris, Gilles seals his absolute allegiance to her with a kiss - a lingering kiss - on her wound. He wonders already where the fire that he feels emanate from her comes from, God or the Devil. Either way, he is her man, he says, since he has now taken communion of her blood.

Tournier's Gilles possesses profound spiritual yearnings, but when Joan is condemned as a limb of the fiend (as the Duke of Bedford called her), Gilles is thrown into desequilibrium. If she belongs to the Devil, he must too. He follows her to Rouen, and in one of Tournier's few invented incidents - watches her being put to death at the stake. The slight unhinges him, and from then on, by "metamorphosis maligne", he will "unfurl his wings as an angel of hell." (Tournier somehow manages to be cooie and dovetail at once). The evidence of his trial and Breton folklore provide the author with material for his protagonist's sadism; for the oracles of fate and mayhem he now succumbs himself to, and with the intriguing historical character of François Prelati, an Italian astronomer, who like many others in France

at that time, sought employment in a nobleman's court.

Prelati promised Gilles that he would reveal the Devil himself to Gilles if he sacrificed enough victims. Prelati is here portrayed as a dandy, an alchemist, and a spoiled priest, dedicated to the pursuit of gold and the acceptance of evil-doing as good. He is as graceful and beautiful as the Grollio frescoes we are reminded were being painted at that date. He also looks uncannily like Joan, so that Gilles cannot resist placing his destiny in her hands. At the conclusion of the *récit*, Prelati, who has been testifying against Gilles, suggests that like Joan he will now become a saint, purified by fire and repentance. Tournier evinces no interest in the hypothesis that Gilles de Rais was framed for financial and political considerations; such innocence as Tournier attributes to him is an inverted, satanic idealism.

Tournier evokes vividly the gloomy and desolate landscape of the Atlantic coast of Vendée, and the grim medieval fortresses of Gilles's fief; he can bring bestial goryness to close the reader can almost smell the lull's kitchens he describes. But this *récit* is a disappointment, from the author of that rich fantasy on the theme of the Kings (*Gaspard, Melchior et Balthazar*) and the *velchior* of Robinson Crusoe, *Vendredi*. In those novels, he partly used first-person voices, a form that suits his fantastic style of utterance; better, than the further, he is content for his characters to pass by in a *tableau vivant* manner, as if in a *tableau vivant* performed in a brothel catering for a clientele with special tastes.

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to the editor

The Augustan Idea

Sir, - Chude Rawson's thoughtful review of Howard Erskine-Hill's *The Augustan Idea in English Literature* (August 12) asks what the fate of the Augustan theme was after Plaubert and Conrad. The answer is not far to seek.

Hermann Broch's *Death of Virgil* puts forward what is, very probably, the most penetrating and imaginatively persuasive study of Augustus in modern European literature and thought. In the encounter between Augustus and the dying Virgil - a dialogue both external and internal which, itself, takes on the dimensions of a short novel - Broch takes up precisely those motifs of ambivalence which Rawson points to. Broch's Augustus is at once the high patron of the arts, the custodian of order and civility in the Mediterranean world, and the master of political opportunity, of calculated terror. The subtle drama of the situation arises directly from Virgil's perception that the *Aeneid* is nestled in corresponding ambiguities. The Augustan order will use the poem for its own glorification. There are aspects to this order which merit such an aura. But there are also areas of darkness and inhumanity. Will the poem help to conceal these? Can its own humaneness act as anything but ornament? Responding to these questions, writing the *Aeneid* away from Virgil lest the poet destroy it, Broch's Augustus reveals himself to the reader.

GEORGE STEINER,
Churchill College, Cambridge.

Lillian Hellman

Sir, - I am grateful to Stephen Spender for his letter (August 12). Contrary to what your readers have been told (American Notes, July 15), Spender did not carry a message to me from Lillian Hellman suggesting that an apology or retraction "would do". I know of course that he gave me no message from her but it is pleasant (or unpleasant) to know also that, as I supposed, he was never entrusted with one, which she somehow failed to deliver. The first I heard of her from the plaintiff, directly or indirectly, after the programme was the filing of the lawsuit.

Can't your magazine find a reliable correspondent in the US?

MARY MCCARTHY,
Castina, Maine.

'Consequences of Pragmatism'

Sir, - It was to be expected, I suppose, that Simon Blackburn's elegant review (July 15) of Richard Rorty's *Consequences of Pragmatism* should end in a plea for continued employment of philosophers. But we have a useful piece of jargon in economics that argues against it, "negative externalities" - like smoke from the local mill. The activities of philosophers are no trouble at home perhaps, but spill over into neighbouring places. The claim of Philosophy to be a meta-science is a public nuisance, and Richard Rorty is to be commended for doing something about it. The idea that we have suffered quite enough from the impact of Philosophy about good reasons in politics or economics or law.

Blackburn writes: "there is no option of abandoning the use of some concept of truth, of the good, of space and time, or persons and their knowledge and agency". One wonders that he did not realize, to use Rorty's useful notion, that his sentence reads in effect: "... some concept of Truth, of the Good, of Space and Time" and so to Agency. Rorty's point is that the sensible appeal to have talk - even the much despised High Talk - about truth in models of the grain market or of knowledge in histories of medieval villages is commonly used by philosophers, as here by Blackburn, to justify talk about Truth and Knowledge. Once these fustian

get fired the neighbours commence blinking and coughing, and are unable to keep up with their proper trades. If the philosophical mill closes after all and we are left with mere High Talk (or, better, high talk) we shall become ignorant of illocutionary acts and explicit performatives, but happy yet. The high talk will at least not bore us, and the air will clear.

DONALD N. McCLOSKEY,
Department of Economics and of History, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242.

The Nature of Chance

Sir, - Frank Goodridge (Letters, August 12) attributes to me a belief in chance and accident as necessary basic concepts in a physical theory. I do not understand how he could have got this impression from my review (July 29) of Pagels's book, *The Cosmic Code*, since I did not actually state my views there. I was in fact only reporting on what the author was saying in his book. Perhaps because I did not strongly dissociate myself from what the author said, Goodridge may have inferred that I agreed with the usual interpretation of quantum mechanics, and all the ideas that go with it.

I have actually long been a critic of such notions (see, for example, my book *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, 1980). Indeed, I do not think that the nature of chance and accident have yet been clearly understood. There is no doubt that the present laws of the quantum theory yield correct statistical predictions for the general properties of matter. But the question naturally arises as to whether there may be further laws, as yet unknown, which bear on what now appear to be totally fortuitous and accidental individual events. In the usual interpretation of the quantum theory it is assumed indeed that there is no way of going further, towards new ideas offering a deeper understanding of how the individual events emerge. I myself feel that this latter assumption has no solid foundation, and so can be questioned seriously. However, I must admit that we have a long way to go before we can expect to understand the quantum theory in this way.

DAVID BOHM,
Department of Physics, Birkbeck College, University of London.

The Oxford Shakespeare

Sir, - Nigel Alexander is certainly right (July 29) when he praises the strength of the editorial team now engaged on the new Oxford Shakespeare. Indeed, if Shakespeare's textual studies had such a ranking, one of them, Gary Taylor, would clearly be a superstar among the younger generation of textual scholars. But to what end has this exceptional team been assembled? To produce yet one more modernized text of Shakespeare while there still exists no old-spelling edition edited to current standards, and this in the face, or at least, of the original plan for the Oxford edition set forth over forty years ago by R. B. McKerrow. Alexander makes a fairly complete list of the existing competition in modernized editions (this list by my count) but he does not really deal with the question of why Oxford has decided to make a fourth text. It would appear that the idea has not caught on well among booksellers, for when I called at three large London bookshops, and the OUP shop in Charing Cross Road, none had any copies. I was informed by an employee in one of the larger shops that they hadn't bothered to take any. No was introduced into the modern-spelling Shakespeare market. It would appear.

As Alexander says, the Oxford Shakespeare are handsome books, well designed and printed, easy to use and attractively edited. But they are not modernized. Alexander treats only one instance of the problems that this can cause.

In Henry V Taylor omits 2.1.3 so that Falstaff becomes an "English" rather than "African". This is the whole fault

with modernizing. To make such a change, completely in keeping with the plan for the edition announced by Stanley Wells in 1979 (*Modernizing Shakespeare's Spelling, OUP*), cannot be thought to be modernizing; it is emendation. If ancient is a confusion between ensue and nunc, it is the confusion of Shakespeare and his contemporaries and to "correct" the text to "English" is an awful example of what modernization has unleashed upon the texts of this and other of our older writers.

Perhaps this is a minor point, but we must ask ourselves how many such minor points (emendations) must occur in the name of modernization before the play is no longer Shakespeare's. The impact of modernization on criticism and the general understanding of the work can be usefully explored by re-reading Robert Graves and Laura Riding's 'A Study in Original Punctuation and Spelling' (*A Survey of Modernist Poetry*, 1927). And yet we have no properly edited old-spelling text of the greatest writer in our language.

One hears, from time to time, that OUP does intend to bring out an old-spelling text later, though one never hears this officially from OUP. I hope it will be sooner rather than later. We have already waited too long for it. OUP has devoted a half-century to it, and there is simply too much editorial talent available to do it which is currently being squandered on this foray into the gutted modern-spelling market.

WILLIAM P. WILLIAMS,
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Indo-European Languages

Sir, - John Greppin's review (July 1) of V. I. Georgiev's *Introduction to the History of the Indo-European Languages* gave an accurate assessment of this most controversial scholar in what may well be the final summation of his views. Georgiev has always demonstrated a prodigious knowledge of all the bits and pieces of antiquity, the ancient proper names and the glosses. Like Paul Kretschmer, the great classical scholar who was perhaps his model, he couples his proficiency with a bold and resourceful power of combination.

In addition to his speculations about the linguistic affiliations of Thracians and Dacians, cited in the review, Georgiev has long been associated with two other hotly disputed issues which are worthy of mention. One is the so-called "Palaeogreek" hypothesis, elaborated by Georgiev in his *Vorhistorische Sprachwissenschaft* (1941-45); he asserted that the pre-Hellenic population of Greece spoke an Indo-European language, and that by working out the distinctive phonological laws of this non-attested language, he could supply IE etymologies for about 180 Greek words of hitherto obscure derivation. What excitement! In the 1950s this thesis was fiercely attacked; he was supported by the notable monographs of A. J. Van Windekens (1952) and Albert Carnoy (1955), but I think it fair to say that most classical linguists remained sceptical.

In his latest volume Georgiev still endorses another view which has attracted few if any adherents. This is his claim that Etruscan is closely linked with Hittite and that accordingly he can use Hittite as a tool to decipher Etruscan inscriptions. His sample interpretations, as always, are highly ingenious, but the eminent French scholar Alfred Ernout (*Philologica III*, 1965) rejected the entire enterprise, and the best known of all serious Etruscologists, Massimo Palladino, bluntly qualified this "most ambitious attempt so far" to relate Etruscan to Hittite as "without critical foundation" (*The Etruscans*, revised ed 1973, p.246). Where most academics are content to be modest joggers, Georgiev prefers to be a dare-devil "modern driver".

GORDON M. MESSING,
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The Hysterical Women's Movement

Sir, - Every poetic movement in our past and recent history seems to have been fully documented, with one exception: The Hysterical Women's Movement (1963-80). We know this movement existed because reviewers frequently mention it in relation to women poets who appear to have reacted against it. The latest reference to the school, or wave, intrudes the review of Gillian Clarke's *Letter from a For Country* (July 15) in the course of which Anne Stevenson praises the author for having emerged into calmer waters after the "vengeance, self-immolation, man-hating and blood" which were "the themes of the angry women who followed Sylvia Plath", women who, apparently, took from Plath "those elements best calculated to sustain her note of hysteria".

I do not wish to denigrate Anne Stevenson's thoughtful review of Gillian Clarke's collection and am only interested to know the names of the poets who have been even more harshly castigated by Ian Hamilton as "post-Plath hysterics" or "muscular harpies of the Adrienne Rich school". Hamilton's charge came in a review of collections by Carol Rumens and Vicki Feaver, neither of whom he considered worthy of even the "condescending type of praise" he would have liked to bestow on two practitioners whose verse was not "snappishly keen to flaunt itself as women's verse".

Sadly, he wrote, they were "a tame, predictable and well-behaved as any bloke".

These are only two amongst many examples of reviews and critical articles which measure the poets under consideration against The Hysterical Women's Movement, but in none of them are we given the names of members of that movement, or titles of the books they wrote. All we know is that their voices were almost uniformly "shrill" or "strident".

Perhaps the time has come to set the record straight, and I should like to suggest that those who have documented the movement provide a list of the women who deserve our scorn.

SYLVIA KANTARIS,
14 Osborne Park, Helston, Cornwall.

E. H. Carr

Sir, - Leo Labedz, as might be expected, counter-attacks (Letters, August 5). So, despite my five or six critical reviews, I share many of Carr's illusions and ambiguities. Furthermore Carr praises me for avoiding "complacent moralising" in my own book on Stalinism. Labedz asks whether I would consider this as an example of "guilt by association". Well, no. Rather I would ask him whether this was meant to reflect on Carr or on me. After all, my books did feature Stalin's crimes rather prominently! Is "complacent moralising" a virtue?

Labedz still refuses to accept that, in writing a history of a country, one is under no obligation to describe, or denounce, the tyrannical acts of a despot prior to the period at which they occurred. In describing the 1920s, historians will tend to analyse Stalin's rise to power, not the crimes he committed in subsequent decades. In my own book on Soviet economic history, for example, collectivization and Stalin's mass terror do not make their appearance until Chapter 7, though of course I was aware of them also when writing Chapter 1. Labedz, however, is sure that they were not in Carr's mind until the revelations of Khrushchev and Solzhenitsyn. How does he know?

Does this follow from his writings of the period? Labedz is selective in his evidence. He, himself, mentions, in another context, a highly favourable review by Carr of Borkenau's book on the Comintern, this appeared at a time when he was supposed to be a Stalin-apologist. Yet Borkenau's book

is vehemently anti-Stalinist. In a 1951 review of a book on diplomatic history, Carr drew attention to the fact that its Soviet author had omitted the names of almost every Soviet diplomat, because they had perished in the purge. His attitude in those years is indeed open to be less ardent and more nuanced.

Now "Thermidor", Labedz continues to make heavy weather of what, in the present context, is an irrelevant, I did not say that the issue was unimportant, only that the passage was symbolic, during the past century, popular turbulence, and dreams of escape from current realities; but in this same period, it "came to stand implacably for the power of the state". The polarity thus evoked does indeed constitute one of the main themes of Chinese history since the Reform Movement of 1895. Spence returns to this theme now and again, in particular in parallels between the repression of dissenters by the Guomindang in the 1930s and 1940s, and their treatment by the Communists after 1949, but the state does not loom large in this book. The emphasis is rather on visions of a better future, these were entertained them, and how these dreams were dissipated and frustrated.

To this extent, the subtitle is misleading. The book is not about the Chinese and their revolution, in other words about the revolutionary transformation undergone between 1895 and 1980 by Chinese society and the Chinese people as a whole. It deals rather with experience of, and participation in, revolutionary change by a relatively small sample of writers and intellectuals. There is no consistent attempt to define China's predicament in political and economic terms (as opposed to emotional and aesthetic terms), or to analyse with any rigour the choices available to the rulers, and what they might have done if they had tried. Consequently, there is no coherent explanation of why things remained, as they did in the author's view, so bad.

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Psychosexual Medicine

Sir, - I was of course as disappointed as any author by Anthony Clare's somewhat dismissive review (July 8) of my book, *The Making of Love*, but that is a chance we all take.

However, that so publicly known a psychiatrist should not apparently have found time to read his clinical book with care is less important to me personally than to the future of the work of the Institute of Psychosexual Medicine, which I attempt to describe for a general readership. May I therefore put this straight?

While the "poetic" chapter headings may not be to Clare's taste, the last, "Who does what wins", is not only about premarital tension and the menopause, but about the fact that sexually, aging need not mean despair.

Clare says there is no follow-up. I summarize more than twenty-five years of clinical study by more than 1,300 doctors. I know of no other study of any psychological method so broadly based over such a long period.

Finally, Clare questions the importance of "psychoanalytic" training in sexual counselling. He did not apparently take in that the work is a new and brief psychoanalytic application of psychoanalysis, not that the training is an in-service group method entailing only two hours fortnightly. More importantly, one of my references (Eleanor Mears, *Public Health*, 1978) reports a comparative study of the results of twenty-six of our unselected trained doctors (ie, not "dream") with those of a unit of modified Masters and Johnson techniques which we know to be excellent (Dr John Bancroft, *Oxford*). Our results were found broadly to be twice as effective in half the time, even for those measurable "sexual dysfunctions" which we would regard as mere symptoms of truly human sexual distress.

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Visionaries and victims

Stuart Schram

JONATHAN D. SPENCE

The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution 1895-1980

516pp. Penguin. Paperback, £4.50, £14.00 6279 3

The Gate of Heavenly Peace, says Jonathan Spence in his preface (to a book originally published in 1982 and now reissued in paperback), has come to symbolize, during the past century, popular turbulence, and dreams of escape from current realities; but in this same period, it "came to stand implacably for the power of the state". The polarity thus evoked does indeed constitute one of the main themes of Chinese history since the Reform Movement of 1895. Spence returns to this theme now and again, in particular in parallels between the repression of dissenters by the Guomindang in the 1930s and 1940s, and their treatment by the Communists after 1949, but the state does not loom large in this book. The emphasis is rather on visions of a better future, these were entertained them, and how these dreams were dissipated and frustrated.

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This need not have been the case. To present the drama and turmoil of the years 1895-1980 in terms of the perception of even by a literate and articulate group of observers such as those discussed here might have been a useful bauble device to trying to convey to a non-specialist audience what it felt like to be a Chinese, exposed to national dismemberment, political oppression, grinding poverty and the collapse of the old cultural universe. In some degree, the book does fulfil such a purpose: the individuals whose cases Spence illuminates, in a way no one else has done before, important aspects of the revolution, and in the process brings us closer to a full understanding of its meaning.

Nonetheless, this is in many ways admirable and impressive work, displaying great literary skill, thorough and meticulous scholarship, and such rare qualities as imagination and originality. Though it does not effectively encompass the whole massive phenomenon of the twentieth-century Chinese revolution, that is almost certainly more than can reasonably be demanded of any one book. Spence illuminates, in a way no one else has done before, important aspects of the revolution, and in the process brings us closer to a full understanding of its meaning.

Speaking analytically, the crucial issue throughout the book is undoubtedly that of the interaction between Western influences and the traditional Chinese culture, and the painfully slow and difficult progress towards a new synthesis. Many of us who write about nineteenth and twentieth-century China have formulated the problem in these terms. Spence's contribution, which he is able to make because he concentrates on the intellectuals who were at once the vehicle of Westernization and the field of struggle for the interplay of many disparate influences, lies in telling us not only how some writers thought about this issue, but what it signified, existentially, to be thus pulled in several directions at once.

It is this context which gives broader significance to the details, dwell on the whole, and no definite answer to the question of whether or not there was a continuous process of change from the Reform Movement of 1895 onwards, which can be called the Chinese revolution, is not for lack of skill but because of a deliberate methodological choice. To begin with, Spence has chosen, as in earlier works such as *Ti Chou Yin* and *The Kang-hsi Emperor*, *Bondservant and Master*, and *Aubrey Beardsley* in the rather more unlikely environment of Chinoiserie, or *Qu Qiubai's* encounters in

advisers in China), to view the political process neither from the top, nor from the bottom, but as it were laterally. Just as the Kangxi (K'ang-hsi) Emperor was a secondary figure in that book, Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, and Mao Zedong are, as the author points out in his preface, secondary figures here. Nor is this history from below, focusing as in a Marxist interpretation on the proletariat, or the "masses", or on the daily lives of ordinary people, as in the case of some modern Western schools of historical writing.

Instead, Spence concentrates on a group of men and women who all enjoyed in some degree elite status, and the capacity to influence opinion through their writings and actions. Many of them had (like the Kangxi Emperor's trusted bondservant, Cao Yin, or Ta'ao Yin) direct access at some time and in some degree to the holders of power; none of them ever actually exercised power himself. Moreover, the personal torments of these writers and intellectuals are given at least as much prominence as the impact on their lives of war, famine, tyranny and revolution.

Spence endeavours to set his case-studies in a broader context by interpolating, every now and then, a brief summary of the political history of the times. These passages are, however, derivative and slightly perfunctory. (For example, there is no mention, in references to the United Front of 1923-27 between the Chinese Communist Party and the Guomindang, of the curious form of this alliance, known as the "bloc within", which influenced so greatly the course of events.) They are also sometimes inaccurate. (To give only one example, the land of the rich peasants had not, in 1951, been parcelled out among the poor, as stated on p.363; Mao Zedong supported at this time the policy of leaving the rich peasants largely alone, to get on with the job of production.) In any case, they add up to no more than about 10 per cent of the text, and do not provide a sufficiently clear and detailed story line, so a reader could come to this book with no previous knowledge of the Chinese revolution, and take Spence's work as the single volume that would tell him everything about the subject.

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Russia with Tolstoy's granddaughter, with Chailapin, and Lunacharsky. All of this has been covered before in the monographic literature (to which Spence gives full credit), but the juxtaposition of such varied visions drives home more forcefully the point that the notion of the Western cultural world as panacea, or as Elysium, was both self-indulgent refuge for a few privileged intellectuals, and an element of ferment and therefore of change, or even of revolution, in the paralysed and fragmented China of the 1920s and 1930s.

Xu Zhimo, whose intellectual tastes, like his amours, were variegated, was drawn also to the ideal of a united Asian civilization of a uniquely spiritual nature, preached by Tagore during a visit in China in 1924; this particular prophet was rejected, however, not only by the radicals but by many liberal intellectuals, who did not believe the Indian thinker could tell the Chinese how to work out the relationship between Western influences and their own tradition.

Broadly speaking, Qu Qiubai, Ding Ling and the other Communists discussed here shared, in the 1920s and 30s, the striking negative assessment of Chinese society and culture put forward by the non-Party leftist Lu Xun, though they had a faith in the particular Soviet variant of Western culture which Lu did not wholly share, and accepted a discipline which he would not endure. But, to cut Spence's long and subtle argument short, as the Chinese Communist Party, and Mao Zedong in particular, moved during the Yan'an period towards an increasingly traditional conception of rule, and of their own infallibility, even Communists such as Ding Ling reformed separately, but one could wish he had spared a little more space for the similarities and differences, and related what was done to Bolshevik principle and practice. While carrying out land reform, the Vietnamese Party, for example, was copying other Chinese policies as well, from the forbidding Thought Reform to ideologies like the fly-swallowing campaign (152 million Vietnamese diptera downed in a week).

This assessment, while it would certainly not be accepted as it stands, would be recognized to contain substantial elements of truth by the current Chinese leadership. Spence's conclusion that they could scarcely accept. After a carefully balanced account of positive trends, such as the release and rehabilitation of Ding Ling and others, and negative facts such as the harsh sentences on Wei Jingsheng and other dissidents, he asks the rhetorical question: "Did these facts balance out in some way...?" But then he gives, as his answer, a poem which ends:

Living
A net.

In other words, Chinese society, and the Chinese state, remain a net, enmeshing the individual, as Tan Sitong wrote at the time of the Reform Movement, and Mao Zedong put it in 1919, discussing the suicide of a young woman forced into an arranged marriage. I would not venture to assert, at a time when the Party in China has once more forcefully proclaimed its right, and its duty, to exercise control over the political process, and over the direction of change, that Spence is entirely wrong. But at the same time it seems to me overly simplistic to suggest that nothing has changed, nothing can change, and that the individual in China is confronted with exactly the same dilemmas as fifty or sixty years ago. A proper answer to these questions would require, in my view, an analysis of the political system and its evolution which is almost wholly absent here.

Such reservations do not, however, detract from the value of this richly evocative account of a period which runs from the effective end of the monarchy inaugurated more than two thousand years ago by Qin Shihuang to the beginning of a substantially if not wholly new phase in the development of the state founded by Mao Zedong in 1949. If *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* is not yet the definitive history of the Chinese revolution, it will be, henceforth, the indispensable companion to further reading and reflection on that topic.

The collective idea

Dennis J. Duncanson

EDWIN E. MOISE

Land Reform in China and North Vietnam: Consolidating the Revolution at Village Level

305pp. University of North Carolina Press. £15.

0 8078 1547 0

The land policy of Communist parties once they are in power is, with few exceptions, collectivization; the vanguard Party exercising proletarian dictatorship has to make sure of controlling all the masses' surplus value. Why then should the Chinese and Vietnamese parties have started off with the opposite policy of a vigorous "land reform" to break up estates into more or less equal individual holdings? The reason was that Stalin, their model, had to face notorious opposition when he embarked on collectivization. Both his Chinese and his Vietnamese pupils, therefore, took advantage of inequalities of land-holding in their countries to carry out a high-sounding but ruthless "land-to-the-tiller" campaign as a preliminary to enforced collectivization; as they hoped, execution of the final policy then went through without any lull.

Edwin E. Moise rightly claims that his is the first survey of land reform in China and Vietnam to appear in a single book. There are in fact many reasons for linking the actions of the two Parties - not least Ho Chi Minh's double apprenticeship under Mao Zedong, in 1924-26 and in 1938-40. Moise is right to narrate the two reforms separately, but one could wish he had spared a little more space for the similarities and differences, and related what was done to Bolshevik principle and practice. While carrying out land reform, the Vietnamese Party, for example, was copying other Chinese policies as well, from the forbidding Thought Reform to ideologies like the fly-swallowing campaign (152 million Vietnamese diptera downed in a week).

On the face of it, sources of information are copious: Party newspapers, observer-accounts from Western sympathizers in China - though not in Vietnam - and several rare Party treatises the author's industrious inquiries have brought to light. The general procedure has been recounted before: Party "work-teams"

were sent to newly-occupied villages to attach class labels to everybody (labourer, poor peasant, middle peasant, rich peasant, landlord); kongarong courts "struggled" individuals whom the cadres selected to be named as "despots" - usually civil-war "traitors"; the masses "punished" the despots for being what they were; and finally the villages' land was parcelled out, together often, with any movable "fruits of struggle". Moise draws on all types of published information but concentrates on statistics of results taken from Party treatises; he concedes that, for all the appearance of precision (as over the flies), some of the "classifications" were hit-and-miss, but credits the figures with rough reliability. In the absence of land registration before or after, it is hard to agree with him; Party condemnations of "bureaucratic" denigrated paperwork - no respect for old titles, no new titles issued, no records kept. Land reform consequently was not a measure of public administration.

Moise admits that it did entail a good deal of flogging and killing of "leprosies"; he then invokes scraps of circumstantial evidence, with a lot of conjecture, to minimize the bloodshed, especially in Vietnam. He hazards no guess how the flogging and killing were carried out. It is true that "rectifications" and "corrections of errors" were ordered by both Parties after it came out that some victims had not owned any land after all, but these look more like Leninist "zigzags" and Stalinist purges of "temporary allies" than bouts of bourgeois leniency towards enemies of humane social justice. The land reforms and their attendant outrages are better understood in the light of the "revolutionary violence" that has followed - not preceded - most seizures of power by Communist Parties ever since Engels enjoined on them the intimidatory *Grausamer Peur* of the Jacobins; they reformed men, not land - liquidated, that is, known and suspected enemies and deterred future opposition from the very masses they mobilized to do the dreadful deeds whose interests it was intended to submerge in collectivism. But not, alas, once for all: when setting off his Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution a decade or more later, Mao declared that wave after wave of land-reform terror would be required before the New Man could be bred in China. For the Vietnamese, land reform has returned in the guise of permanent civil war rather than permanent revolution, but it must feel the same.

Among this week's contributors

JETHRO ACWORTH is the *non de plume* of a leading crossword compiler for a national newspaper.

ELIE KEDOURIE's books include *Islam and the Modern World*, 1980.

E. J. KENNEY's edition of the *Moretus*, sometimes ascribed to Virgil, will be published this autumn.

I. D. McFARLANE is Professor of French Literature at the University of Oxford.

CHARLES NICHOLL's biography of Thomas Nashe, *A Cup of News*, was published earlier this year.

MICHAEL RAMSEY was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1961 to 1974.

STUART SCHRAM is Professor of Politics with reference to China at the University of London.

DAVID SHAW is senior lecturer in French at the University of Kent at Canterbury.

BERNARD WASSERSTEIN is Director of the Taubman Institute at Brandeis University, Massachusetts.

JOACHIM WHALLEY is a Fellow of Robinson College, Cambridge.

J. J. WILKES is Professor of Archaeology of the Roman Provinces at the University of London.

YONICK WILKS's most recent book, co-edited with Karen Sparck-Jones, is *Automatic Natural Language Parsing*, 1983.

Rough but true

Charles Nicholl

ROGER POOLEY (Editor)
George Gascoigne: The Green Knight,
Selected Poetry and Prose
160pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £5.95.
0 85635 279 9

The poems of George Gascoigne are more often mentioned than read. He is usually met with as an "early" or "formative" example of some Elizabethan literary mode: the sonnet sequence, the blank-verse satire, the prose comedy, the proto-novel. Gascoigne had a stab at them all. This role of literary pioneer is not just modern labelling; by 1589, twelve years after his death, Nashe was describing him in just these terms, as one who "first beat the path" in poetic heights achieved "since his departure".

In bulk, Gascoigne's eliterative, semi-proverbial style is hard to digest. He seems - another favourite term, "transitional" - having neither the Tudor grace of his predecessors, Wyatt and Surrey, nor the intellectual derring of the later Elizabethans. Yet for all this Gascoigne was himself, and Roger Pooley's slim new selection is just what was needed to bring him out. Here is the poet at his best - tough, humorous, vocal, direct - together with a selection from his less-known prose works: his love intrigue, *The Adventures of Master F.J.* (1573); his "Notes of Instruction" on verse-making (1575); his news pamphlet, *The Spoil of Antwerp* (1576), a finely clipped piece of front-line journalism.

Gascoigne's brief, crowded career has the typical flavour of the young Elizabethan "gent". His father, Sir John, was a Bedfordshire landowner; JP, MP, staunch Catholic landowner. Born in about 1539, George was probably educated at Cambridge and certainly of Gray's Inn (1555-57). After the accession of Queen Elizabeth he sparked off a court case, but was "cast off" in 1563 and retired back to Bedfordshire to nurse his debts. He married, farmed, fought occasional duels and frequent low-suits, and composed poems. In 1565 he returned to legal studies at Gray's Inn. For his literary friends there - Alexander Neville,

the Kinwelmarsh brothers, et al - he wrote the excellent "Memories" variations, and translated Italian plays: *Dolce's A Glosia*, with Francis Kinwelmarsh, and Ariosto's *I Suppositi*. His version of the latter - *Gascoigne's Suppos* - was used by Shakespeare in *The Taming of the Shrew*. In the early 1570s, restless and hounded by creditors, Gascoigne took to soldiering, and joined Sir Humphrey Gilbert's unit fighting the Spanish in the Netherlands. Money problems probably prompted another decisive step, a most "ungentlemanly" one: in 1573 he published his first collection of poetry, *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*.

It is the hard-pressed variety of Gascoigne's life which gives the *Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* its distinctive love. Amid the predominant love lyrics runs a wry, intimate vein of autobiography. In "Gascoigne's Woodmanship", a nobleman jokes about Gascoigne's bad aim with a bow: this he takes as a useful metaphor for his life of discarded hopes and missed opportunities, as courtier, lawyer, lover, farmer, philosopher, soldier - "Believe me, Lord, the case is nothing strange: He shoots awry almost at every mark." A later poem in the same mood - "The Green Knight's Farewell to Fancy" - gives Pooley's selection its title. This Green Knight is not the implacable, axe-man of medieval romance, but the disappointed face of George in the mirror. A chatty verse letter from "long George" to his friend Ben Withpall, and the downbeat ending of "Dan Bartholomew's Dolorous Discourses" - "I thus bewray the torments of my time/Bear with my Muse, it is not as it was" - catch this same intimate note.

In his prime in the 1570s Gascoigne was a man of action and a popular author: the soldier-poet, "Iam Mari gann Mercurio", who lived hard and saw straight. In the Netherlands he was variously a government agent, a prisoner of war, and an eye-witness of the sacking of Antwerp. Gascoigne's Voyage into Holland, An. 1572", here given entire, is a superb action-poem, a creaking story of naval warfare that recedes over its rhyme-scheme like something by Browning. As "The Fruits of War" (1575) and *The Spoil of Antwerp* show, he was no

linguistic drum-beater. He totted up the body-count, loathed the Dutch allies, praised his Spanish captor De Liques, and saw brutalities that made a mock of military discipline: "sure, if this be their order, I had rather be counted a besieger than a brave soldier in such a band". As a member of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's seafaring circle he deeply impressed himself on the young half-brother, Walter Raleigh, whose earliest excursion into print was a poem in praise of Gascoigne's *Steel Glass* (1576), and whose own later *conspicuous mundi* poems owe much to Gascoigne's vision.

A flood of Gascoigne works appeared in 1575-6: a revised edition of his poetry, *The Posies*, including a bawdier version of *Master F.J.*; a verse translation, *The Noble Art of Venery*; his innovative satire, *The Steel Glass*, and its stage companion, *The Glass of Government*; tracts religious (The Drun of Doomsday) and homiletic (A Delicate Diet for Dainty-mouthed Drunkards); a preface to Gilbert's tract on the North-West Passage, which he also saw through publication. At Kenilworth in July 1575 he scripted, and performed in, Leicester's sumptuous entertainments for the Queen. On the crest of popularity and success, he sickened. In October 1577, at the home of the poet George Witherstone, he died, aged about thirty-eight.

As a stylist Gascoigne was partially eclipsed by the successes of Euphuism and neo-Platonic sonneting, but his virtues undoubtedly surface again, in the verse satires of Donne and Hall, in the pamphlets of Greene, Nashe and Dekker. More, Gascoigne gave a kind of shape to the Elizabethan writer: provincial-born, socially mobile, individualist, the intellectual with a commercial touch. Boasting his own diareptability Nashe said, "I have sung George Gascoigne's Counterpoint", meaning he had done a spell in the Counter, the doct's prison. He had no particular line in mind, just an image of Gascoigne - who was indeed imprisoned for debt in 1570 - as a man of the world, a poet of hard realities. Gascoigne will survive, and all the better for this new anthology. His poems, as he once said of his "metres", are "but rough in many places, and yet they are true".

Performing rights

Lachlan Mackinnon

JONATHAN V. CREWE

Unredeemed Rhetoric: Thomas Nashe and the Scandal of Authorship
120pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £12.
0 8018 2848 1

Jonathan Crewe sees Thomas Nashe's exuberant carnival of language as an assertion of rhetoric and performance against the univocal notion of truth by which they are customarily disciplined. It is mildly surprising not to find John Kristeva's discussion of Menippean discourse in the footnotes to *Unredeemed Rhetoric*, because Crewe shares with her an interest in Bakhtin and in the disruptive, anarchic forces of the Renaissance appears to repress: the publisher describes this book as an "aggressively innovative reading" of Nashe and, although the position it takes is hardly novel, it is certainly aggressive.

Crewe proposes that Nashe acknowledges rhetoric, a decented system, as parasitic on idealism but that he uses it to unsettle his reader and the reader's preconceptions. So far, this sounds like the routine deconstruction job, and in many ways the book's tone supports that. However, Nashe is an author who resists his generic death. As Crewe says:

"The privileging of rhetoric to the exclusion of any competing principle of utterance or interpretation represents a formal or philosophical possibility, yet this is not a possibility extensively developed in the work of Nashe and his peers. Despite some reversals of polarity, local rather than general in extent, what emerges as a more serious possibility is an anxiety about rhetorical encroachment or fear of the seemingly inextinguishable (malign, hidden) implications of rhetorical performance."

The reader chastened

Nicholas Spoliar

JAN FERGUS

Jane Austen and the Didactic Novel: Northanger Abbey, Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice
162pp. Macmillan. £20.
0 33 31989 3

Jane Austen and the Didactic Novel may perhaps lay claim to a certain originality as the only study of the author to limit itself almost exclusively to her first three novels. Jan Fergus finds her subject in the comparison of them with eighteenth-century models, and in Jane Austen's manipulation of her readers' responses. She pays tribute to the sophistication of the novelist's techniques, discussing *Northanger Abbey* in its relation to Gothic and sentimental literary conventions, and *Pride and Prejudice* with reference to *Cecilia* and *Sir Charles Grandison*. Like *Northanger Abbey*, *Sense and Sensibility* is seen as a "bookish" work, in which the reader's expectations are foisted, and attention is drawn to the conventions that are both used and undercut.

In spite of its largely commendable aims, and some astute comments, this is a number of ways a disappointing book. Unlike Marilyn Butler's 1975 study of a related topic, with its marvellous, and drilling of the evidence, *Jane Austen and the Didactic Novel* is not a systematic study of its subject, and rarely rises above the small change of critical currency. Jane Austen's intentions are found to be "primarily didactic" because of her commitment to, pleasing instruction, and we learn that her teachings are embodied in her books rather than in her precepts, a fact which rather oddly leads Dr. Fergus to a distinction between readers' emotions and their judgments. Her thesis that the reader is encouraged into mistaken interpretations, and then like the character "Elinor" is "seems to overstate the case. Of course there are some marvellous coups de

Romance and religious poetry are the escape routes which Nashe does not take and, to put it otherwise, he is as frightened by the latent deconstructive power of his work as his reader. Crewe is humiliated enough not to treat the work wholly from its maker, and is therefore able to persuade us that the terror Nashe evokes in Gabriel Harvey and his progeny may indeed be related to the hell of shifting significations Nashe uncovers.

It is, of hell because, as Crewe shows, Nashe is not as liberated as he seems. Jonsonian comedy serves to remind us that "humour" is an entrapment: it is a pity that Crewe does not explore *The Alchemist* in this context, as in *Face* we see rhetoric unable to leave the circuit of servility. Where the play is used to parallel Nashe's creation of a fallen, urban poetic to replace the poetry that fails him, Rhetoric may enslave its user, and Crewe finds in Nashe the compulsions and sado-masochism which enact that condition at the psychological level.

This is, then, a forceful and interesting book. It must be read with caution, though: in a passage dealing with informers in *Letter Stuffs*, Crewe invents difficulties which simply do not exist. Part of the problem is created by the selectiveness of his quotation, part by an apparent wish to be clever instead of serious. Crewe makes heavier weather of pronouns than is usual, and by being obsessed with Nashe's textuality bypasses his rapidly and intermittently carelessness. This book is not wholly reliable in detail, and it won't do to say of possible misrepresentation that "in the case of so uncandid an author the offense may be considered pardonable". As Crewe seems to acknowledge, his argument is not entirely convincing, but it takes the Nashe problem seriously and offers some useable ideas about it. A lively book on Nashe rather than the problem would now be welcome.

Madre In Jane Austen - literally so in the case of the interrupted play in *Mansfield Park* - but when it comes to interpretation the reader tends to be guided by the author, as in the case of Elizabeth Bennet's misjudgments or General Tilney's cadishness. The confident and pervasive moral discriminations of the author provide an equivalent for us to that "rule to apply to, which settled everything", which sustains Fanny Price.

The lack of an appropriate framework is notably apparent in the discussion of *Northanger Abbey*, which is treated on a burlesque different from Jane Austen's other novels "in almost every possible way", lacking serious or moral content, and with a heroine who is "come throughout". It should be obvious that Catherine's discoveries about her true and her false friends necessarily involve moral discriminations, as do, at a further remove, Henry Tilney's capacity for moral distinctions, and his awareness of the elches of feeling and language. The elches of feeling and language, as too book is surprisingly seen as "brilliant and calculated" and here the manipulative technique, and here the minor misreading, as when Catherine, arriving at Northanger, "promptly sees herself in just such a chamber" as the parody-Gothic one described by Tilney.

The comparison of Jane Austen with her forerunners is less productive than might have been hoped, because of the unlikelihood to *Pride and Prejudice* the Richardson and Burney novels: a larger sample of novels, permitting fuller generalizations, might have been used. The discussion of Jane Austen's later novels is firmer than that of the earlier ones, though throughout the book difficulties of definition seem to be caused by the author's insistence on her subject's education of the "temperament". Surely false distinctions are being made when we are told that the country there were at least eight different kinds of slavery, including hereditary slaves, debt slaves, military slaves, etc. Helle's law of the land, as Helle's masters and slaves, slave families, "court" procedure, lawsuits and owners over fugitive slaves etc., and drew attention to the fact

RICHARD HELLIE

Slavery in Russia, 1450-1925
786pp. University of Chicago Press.
£31.50.
0 226 33647 0

A glance at the index of any modern work on medieval or modern European history will reveal how seldom the word "slavery" occurs. It is as though slaves played but a small part in the social structure and economy of Europe, compared to the world of antiquity, the Middle East, the Far East or the New World. Yet in Romance and Teutonic languages the very word for slave, "servus", has been identified since the ninth century with Slav, for the unfortunate population of medieval Rus' was sold into slavery, in Europe as well as in the East, by its own princes. After the disappearance of Kievan Rus' and the Ottoman conquest of the Crimea, Muscovy remained the principal supplier of the slave-markets of Kefe, Istanbul and Venice, as a consequence of the almost annual Tartar raids over two centuries, which usually netted several thousand victims a year. There were Russian and Polish slaves in Germany, Italy and Spain, and, as late as 1678, Russian slaves in the galleys of Marseilles.

These slaves were either captured in war or seized in order to be sold. Richard Hellie's *Slavery in Russia, 1450-1925* deals with a somewhat different kind of institution. Hellie's name is well known to students of Russian history as that of the author of *Emergence and Military Change in Muscovy*, published in 1972, a work of fundamental importance for the understanding of the evolution of pre-Petrine Russia in general and serfdom in particular. His new book is a most welcome addition to the growing number of scholarly studies in English on Muscovite Russia and reveals the same mastery of command of analysis and synthesis. As he has pointed out elsewhere, slavery in Russia has not aroused the same interest as serfdom, possibly because its extent has not been appreciated in spite of the fact that the Code of 1649 contains more articles on slavery than any other topic and that slaves may have numbered 10 per cent of the population.

Soviet historiography has also tended to neglect the subject, even to deny its importance. Nevertheless, since the death of Stalin Soviet historians have been able to come to grips with the problem of the large-scale presence of slaves in a society alleged to be feudal in Marxist terms, and have written a number of valuable monographs on the subject. Hellie has, however, cast his net much more widely, and has analysed some 2,500 documents, drawn mainly from the 16th and 17th centuries, and dealing with sales of Novgorod, Novosibirsk, etc., etc., supplemented by a quite fascinating series of lawsuits before the Slavery Chancery and by prosopographical studies of Muscovite slave-owners. Since Hellie is not tied up in Marxist knots he has been able to approach his subject without preconceptions. The value of his work is much enhanced by the eminently comparative framework in which he has set it. He ranges from China, Thailand, antiquity, the Ottoman empire, Africa and the New World, to the Amerindians of the North-West Pacific coast, who practised a particularly harsh form of slavery in which slaves were killed and thrown into the sea as a demonstration of their owners' contempt for wealth.

Hellie has divided his book into a first part, dealing with the law of slavery, and a second part, dealing with the sociology of slavery. In the first section he discusses the evolution of slavery from the fifteenth century onwards, omitting, however, any analysis of the debate on the nature of slavery in Kievan Rus'. This is perhaps the country there were at least eight different kinds of slavery, including hereditary slaves, debt slaves, military slaves, etc. Hellie's law of the land, as Helle's masters and slaves, slave families, "court" procedure, lawsuits and owners over fugitive slaves etc., and drew attention to the fact

The class of the unfree

I. de Madariaga

Strange as it may seem, just as slavery was being eliminated in the rest of Europe in favour of servants, so in Russia a type of slavery was being strengthened and servants were being finally eliminated.

Yet if we bring together the specific features of Russian *kholostvo*, we find that there was no slave-market in Muscovy; slaves were to an overwhelming extent insiders who "sold" themselves, that is to say the act of sale was theirs, ultimately, however harsh the economic or psychological pressures which drove them to it. Slave and slave-owner had the same ethnic background and the same speech. They shared the same faith and worshipped in the same church. The slave marriage-tie was respected and the slave woman accompanied her husband in cases of disputed ownership. Moreover, Muscovite slaves seem on the whole not to have been used for productive economic purposes, whatever the situation may have been in Kievan Rus'. They might sometimes be settled on farms, or employed as agricultural labourers. More usually, a slave was employed as a household servant, or as a mounted fighting-man, a groom or a baggage-train attendant. The number of elite slaves began to decline in the seventeenth century as the government developed its own impersonal agencies of administration, unconnected with private households, but slaves could still kill the cross (take the oath) on their masters' behalf in lawsuits and act as their advocates.

Clearly, if slavery be regarded as a postponement of imminent death then Muscovite slavery offered a way out in time of famine, war and devastation, for the inadequate, the incompetent, the unlucky and the disadvantaged, in a country where all forms of charity, whether private or monastic, were conspicuous by their absence. One would seek in vain in Muscovy for the soup-kitchens of Spanish convicts. Hellie produces a great deal of evidence to support the view that slavery provided a haven in bad times. More slaves sold themselves, to a wider range of owners, and at a lower price during the famine years of 1604-05. And though the holder spirit, having recovered from the short-term crisis which had led them to sell themselves to the first place, often fled to freedom

on the periphery, yet many slaves freed on the death of their owner promptly sold themselves to a similar type of owner, having lost the will-power to struggle on independently.

All these features suggest that Muscovite slavery was so unlike the type of economic slavery associated for instance with the New World that one wonders if the same word should be applied to both systems. Hellie argues that it should, and points in the fact that though the process of enslavement was different, the actual power of the slave-owner over the slave was the same. The slave had no peculium, no choice of employment or residence or wife. The fact that he was by and large better treated than most slaves in the West because he was part of the family, and it did not give him any more rights when it came to the crunch. While what Hellie says is doubtless true in the perspective of comparative slavery over time and space, nevertheless, for the modern non-specialist reader whose idea of slavery derives mainly from the New World, the fact that a human being makes the initial decision himself and is not captured, torn away from his homeland and delivered into an alien culture is surely fundamental. Within the context of European slave ownership in modern history, Muscovite "slavery" is unique.

If the motive of the slave was economic security, what was the motive of the slave-owner? Considering the normal cost of buying a slave (averaging two rubles compared to twenty or thirty in the slave-markets of Venice or Kefe) and the cost of feeding him throughout the year, Hellie argues that slave-owning came into the category of status-orientated conspicuous consumption. This may well be true of great magnates, yet clearly one servant at least was a necessity for a low-grade military servant, and when you cannot employ a servant, you must buy a slave. The military servant needed a servant on campaign, the married military servant needed servants for household duties. Hellie notes the use of slaves for drawing water, hewing wood, kitchen gardening etc., and argues that it was the use of slaves which made it possible to keep women in the seclusion from which Peter the Great finally and forcibly delivered

them. But he does not mention slaves in the domestic economy. This seems a singular omission. There were presumably slave wet-nurses. Women must have concerned themselves with brewing, baking, washing, mending and making clothes, preserving, even if spinning and weaving was done by peasant women. Married servants would need female slaves for these tasks (even Peter Woodford had two maids and a mnn). Hellie notes that male slaves far outnumbered female slaves in surviving records, and he attributes this fact to the practice of female infanticide. But is it possible that women could remain servants without becoming slaves? Or that single women, whether slaves or servants, were simply not counted because they were far too insignificant?

Unlike serfdom, slavery in Russia ended with barely a whimper. Hellie does not study the process in any detail, and the most recent relevant work, by E. V. Anisimov, came out after his own book was published. It was of course the quite incidental achievement of that terrible shipwreck, Peter the Great. Disregarding completely the property rights of his subjects, Peter gave freedom to slaves who volunteered for the armed forces in the extent that a large proportion of the army in its early years was composed of ex-military slaves. But the fate of the slaves was bound up with that of the serfs on the introduction of the poll-tax in 1721. It was a tax designed exclusively for the upkeep of the army, and logically enough it was not levied on army officers (ie, the nobility) or on soldiers. It was levied on the rest of the population engaged in productive occupations, but not on slaves, who merely received a wage or maintenance. But it proved too difficult to maintain the distinction between different kinds of labour, and in January 1723 the Imperial tsar decreed that all slaves and peasants be jointly placed on the tax-roll. Like a slave, a serf could now be sold without land, or taken off the land in serf to the household. Like a serf the slave could now be turned into a peasant or a craftsman, and he lost the right to freedom on the death of his master. Both slave and serf were the losers when they were merged into one single class of the unfree.

Radical powers

Chris Baldick

HEATHER GLEN

Vision and Disenchantment: Blake's Songs and Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads

399pp. Cambridge University Press.
£25 (paperback, £9.95).
0 521 25084 6

Two collections of poems as close in time, subject-matter and apparent simplicity as *Lyrical Ballads* and Blake's *Songs* seem to cry out for comparative readings: it is surprising that no extended analysis has appeared until now. Heather Glen answers the need well. In *Vision and Disenchantment*, with a work of meticulous close reading informed at every turn by a detailed sense of the political and cultural context of the two collections, the strength of her analysis is its grounding. In an examination of the minor genres - children's books and "magazine verse" - within and against which Blake and Wordsworth were writing, both working to rebuke their moralizing routines, to subvert the easy patrician humanism of their readers.

Much of this has been suggested before, but Heather Glen builds it into a larger, persuasive comparative argument, testing the respective visions of the world which the two poets offer in place of their contemporaries' plitudes. The result is the five suggested, favouring Blake's response. Wordsworthians will suspect that the exercise itself gives a built-in disadvantage to the more mixed and tentatively experimental *Lyrical Ballads*; but no comparison is at least never allowed to degenerate into a clumsy battle of wills.

The focus of the contrast is less on the undermining of clichés or of controversial moral terms than on the degree to which Blake and Wordsworth envisage a "positive answer to the social problems which contemporary radicals met with largely negative protest. There is nothing liberating about demystification as such", Heather Glen argues, and she accordingly attributes greater radical power to "The Reckoning Green" and "Infant Joy" than to the *Songs of Experience*, finding in the former a vision of potential mutuality - a vision neglected, then as now, by a deadlocked radicalism.

In *Lyrical Ballads*, Glen sees Wordsworth pointing away from such possibilities as surely as Blake points towards them. His isolated voice seeks a human community yet slips back into a guilty and tragic solipsism in which other people shrink into remote, inscrutable signs. The argument is a good deal more sensitive than such a summary might suggest, the readings - particularly of "Simon Lee" - unsettling but never forced.

This is a Blakean book: not least in seeking to apply the social vision of the *Songs* to today's world, but it avoids the vices of that kind of Blakean exegesis which attributes the *Songs* to wheeling on the phobiduous responsibilities of the prophetic bodies. Indeed, Glen ends towards the harmonious in her use of Blake's other writings, restricting herself almost exclusively to his marginalia with Wordsworth more room is made for *The Preface* and the essay on *Imagination*.

Heather Glen engages in responsible criticism: in the important sense she has, in the English radical tradition, something to which to be responsible, the incidental blemishes

in *Vision and Disenchantment* in turn reflect those of the tradition. All the way from Cobbett's "The Thing" to E. P. Thompson's "extremism", English radical writers have made it almost a principle to name their adversary only with the utmost of precision. Glen's terms, usually sharp and exact, blur at this point. On a single page we read that Wordsworth belonged to "the polite culture", and shared with Coleridge a "polite frame of reference", that the life of his neighbours mirrored that of "the polite classes", and that Blake too was patronized by a "polite society". "Polite" is certainly an important term in the period examined, but to allow it such prominence in the diagnosis is circularly self-defeating.

A further irritation is the overloading of the notes with lavish quotation from Glen's favourite modern moralists, whose nebulous terms at times infect the text - at least one "meaningful" interaction" is parodied; this is perhaps the privilege of an author seriously concerned with the kind of future possibility which strain our current vocabulary.

It is, after all, as an inspiration to political change that Blake is valued, and Wordsworth found wanting in this work. For a forcible endorsement of Glen's verdict on this point, one need look no further than the writer whom she acknowledges as a sparing partner in the forming of her arguments, E. P. Thompson. One of the memorable successes of *Protest and Survive* is his application to nuclear deterrence of Blake's lines: "And mutual love brings peace/Till the selfish love increase". One can hardly imagine Wordsworth being mobilized for the radical cause today with such startling power. *Vision and Disenchantment* goes a long way to explaining why not.

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The lower orders

Joachim Whaley

HERMANN REBEL

Peasant Classes: The Bureaucratization of Property and Family Relations under Early Habsburg Absolutism 1511-1636
354pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £28.20.
0 691 05366 9

Is it possible to explain the transition from feudal to modern society? Most historians are at a loss when they confront this question. Those who have attempted an answer have done so on a broad canvas. The traditional view, held by scholars like Otto

Rebel's book is concerned with the reinterpretation of a familiar story - the way in which the Habsburg monarchy was gradually able to extend its power over its territories between 1550 and 1650. He argues that it is impossible to understand this process unless it is examined from the point of view of the victims, the peasants. This is a reasonable enough corrective to the conventional approach. But Rebel does not satisfy the expectations which he arouses. Most of his book is devoted to a detailed analysis of some 860 peasant household inventories from Upper Austria covering the period 1609-40. Not surprisingly, he finds that peasant society was more complex than is sometimes assumed, and that differences in wealth, status and power often generated considerable tensions within it. These were liable to erupt in violence at times of general economic and political crisis, as in the 1620s and 1630s, so that peasant rebellion against the political and religious policies of the crown could assume the character of what Rebel likes to call a "class war".

Hermann Rebel shares a common unease with the grand models and rightly maintains that empirical studies alone can provide more adequate answers. His own book purports to be

Le livre dans les sociétés pré-industrielles (428pp. Athens: Centre de Recherches Néohelléniques, Fondation Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique) records the proceedings of an international conference held two years ago. It offers not only a unusually angled geographical view of the subject, encompassing the Greek world, other areas under Ottoman domination but speaking Western languages, and western Europe. Equally importantly, the conference was a reminder of the scholarly interest now being established in the history of the written or printed word - of its impact on individual readers and on society as a whole - and the speakers included some of those most vigorous in redefining the subject. Among twenty-one papers here, those of Giles Barber, Robert Darnton, Francis Walton, Elizabeth Eisenstein, H. J. Koppitz and H. J. Martin (present) [a perspective largely through American and western European eyes, but the papers in Greek (with summaries in French) will be found as less provoking.

Magnificence and mourning

Tim Dooley

DOUGLAS DUNN

Europe's Lover
18pp. Newcastle upon Tyne:
Bloodaxe. £1.25.
0 906427 46 0

ANDREW MOTION

Secret Narratives
46pp. Edinburgh: Salamander Press.
£6 (paperback, £3).
0 907540 29 5

SEAN O'BRIEN

The Indoor Park
64pp. Newcastle upon Tyne:
Bloodaxe. £3.50.
0 906427 49 5

Each of these new books of poetry justifies the slippery label "post-modern", not particularly as an indication of style, but because each is recognizably the product of a period awkwardly conscious of its immediate history and guiltily uncertain of its future. Douglas Dunn's fourteen-part poem, *Europe's Lover*, celebrates post-imperial Europe in the image of a woman of great age and magnificence who has buried her last child and is now ready to share her rich memories with anyone willing to listen. Europe's variety and complexity are such that here is an arresting monologue. While Dunn recognizes that the ways in which Europeans see their lives vary according to geographical and historical locations, a common sense of European identity can be derived from shared economic experience: Shaped before furnaces of dragging coal-carts with your back in the mines of Yorkshire or Silesia... Shaped in the moulds of foundries in Glasgow and Düsseldorf, From cleared crofts in Sutherland to Fontamare, shaped, Shaped, shaped and ruled

And from an awareness of Europe's relationship with the other continents. Dunn shows the reader how boys in "Leith, Danzig, Riga and Memel" dreamed of "Demerara and Coromandel" of "geographies of skin and spice" and, more sinisterly, how other young people were Shaped and indentured in the gardens of rhododendrons, peacocks And exotic flora brought home by an eccentric uncle Who commanded the firing-squads at "Brazzaville or Hyderabad..." Europe is "a little warehouse of Swiss seconds", a place where evidence of the passage of time, and therefore of the passing of life is never far away. "They are our people too", Europe tells her lover, pointing to "unmarked forest graves" and "white fields / of multiple crucifixion". *Europe's Lover* is a poem which exhibits suffering and exploitation in the past and the present, but is without optimism. Dunn derives hope from the subterranean individuality in a genderless nationalism where love is like "anatomy in meditation on itself" and from a vision, provoked by the sight of a Guadeloupean waitress in a French provincial café, of a world which has abandoned national identities: its "races entwined like fingers". Recognizing that European civilization can be only partially understood by means of "the dollhouses uttered on the air, The music of Bach and Mozart, the rhymes of Dante," Dunn quotes Camus's phrase "Our Europe is not yours". It is part of Dunn's considerable achievement in this poem to make us aware of at least two other Europeans: the Europe of oppressed and "hated" slaves and the Europe that is a "libertarian democratic imagination" might call into being.

Secret Narratives collects seventeen of the shorter poems that Andrew Motion has written since *The Pleasure Machine* (1978). As its title suggests, it continues to extend the interest in narrative revealed in Motion's long poem *Independence* (1981). "The Great Man" and "The Interval" (accounts, respectively, of a disillusioning visit to Schweitzer and of links between Nazism and German theatrical life in the 1930s) use comparatively conventional devices to tell fairly familiar stories. Other poems, such as "Writing", "Open Secrets" and "The Letter" are more innovative, playing with the expectations of narrative structure, with tensions between author and first-person narrator and with notions of fiction and truth.

These interests, however, are only tangentially connected with the qualities which continue to make Motion's poetry of value. His originality of observation nor in an individual approach to poetic form. Rather, he is remarkable for the precision of his technique—particularly in relating speech rhythms to the line of verse and registering vivid physical impressions. "The Lines", which intersperses quotation from a history of Victorian England with evocations of personal loss, is a virtuoso piece; but "Wooding", a poem of no special intellectual ambition, shows most clearly the strength of feeling Motion can wring from a minimum of technical effects and explains why it is no insult to his predecessors to see this poet as a

natural heir to the traditions of Edward Thomas and Ivor Gurney:

We must have looked minute: a father and two sons no more than silhouettes which stooped and staggered comically to where a trailer stood half darkened by the wall. It took an hour. And afterwards, to see us footling round the green wet-appealing loam, they would have thought us happy. There were: me running, my brother kicking leaves, and each of us ducked out with spilt sweet chestnut husks as spiky nipples on our coats.

The whole short afternoon we spoke of anything except your death. And then, next day, beyond that blank enormous wall we buried you, still destitute of ways to show your grief.

The control over diction and rhythm displayed in the phrase "spilt sweet chestnut husks" reveals the work of an inspired craftsman. "The Lines", "Wooding", and "The House Through" also underline how persistently the subject of mourning has enabled Motion to produce writing of the finest quality. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the public themes which

have engaged him most actively — memories of imperial decline or military disaster — have drawn to themselves the tone of bitter-sweet regret developed in his poems of personal loss. An impression is given, whether intended or not, of nostalgia for a Britain great in more than name that ought to be very difficult to justify. A parallel difficulty emerges in the readiness with which Motion's historical imagination populates his poems with the trappings of patrician élites. Whether faced with an aristocratic world of stag hunts and an entrenched bourgeois view over side-pleats to fields of ripening wheat, I cannot be the early reader who responds to Motion's poetry with a feeling that his England is not mine.

Sean O'Brien's *The Indoor Park* evokes a different country where the burgherly houses "belong to others: 'This is where the English live. And we are foreigners.' As a stylist, O'Brien is Motion's inferior, but his first collection demonstrates an imaginative exuberance and intellectual energy which compensate in part for an

intermittent slackness of rhythm and a variability of organization. His best poems combine surrealistic wit with a sense of everyday banality, producing either ambivalent comic effects, as in "The Police": They are not jealous, the police. When they stare at your allotment They're sure there's a body below. But if you say, 'Yes, he's a Rammer!' They ask you, 'And how do you know?' We are not called *Susanne*, Or else we are liars, or both. We would be better off without ourselves.

Or cordoned off, at least. Or a wry lyricism like the following:

The sun is visiting the sick And trying its hands. Who is there who could count its acts of charity with girls. Upon the hands, the fingernails. The eyes, the gold buckles of sandals And the back of knees At bus-stops waiting to go To Drumchapel or wherever History is happening today?

In either mood, O'Brien is a poet who repays his readers' attention, offering them a temperament which is wide in its sympathies and curious in its view of the world.

Recording with honesty

David Profumo

ANTHONY CRONIN

New and Selected Poems
139pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £3.95.
0 85635 367 1

PAUL DURCAN

The Selected Paul Durcan
Edited by Edna Longley
125pp. Belfast: Blackstaff Press.
£4.50.
0 85640 269 9

These two selected volumes aptly illustrate some strong forces at work in the Irish poetry of the last two decades, for despite their stylistic differences Anthony Cronin and Paul Durcan are recognizably kindred spirits. The younger, Durcan, is an impassioned visionary whose poems are often uninhibitedly Romantic, while Cronin is intellectual, urbane, sardonic; his effects are more sombre, his verse more formally stringent. Yet at bottom, through dedications and commentaries, each shows an evident respect for the other's peculiar angle of approach to similar issues, probing the hypocrisy, selfishness and potential destructiveness of human behaviour. Both are ironists and, in their different ways, are fiercely disturbing writers.

Much of Cronin's poetry addresses itself to the problem of poverty and what he sees as the innate human propensity for self-delusion, a theme that affilates him to Swift and the Butler of *Faustina*. This issue is particularly acute where it concerns the writers themselves. In the title essay to his critical collection *A Question of Modernity* (1966) he stressed, "The primary virtue of literature is honesty; its primary purpose is to record", but in his poem "Not Easy" he analyses the way in which the psyche seems designed to prevent this. "Wired for deceit you might say", writers can avoid honesty to their own beliefs by retreating into minute natural description or adopting ideologies or personae that alight simply every truth. Living a life of promises and protection from disappointment and exposure, "A man is ruined by his honesty", he suggests in "Examination of Conscience".

One consequence of this flaw is a reluctance to be honest. In love, Cronin's lovers are frightened to reveal the failures of the past, as in "The Lover" and "The Risk". One of the book's most arresting poems is a finely drawn metaphorical exploration of this theme, "The Elephant in the Girl in Bertram's Mills Circus", where the anthropomorphic animal "like a slow, morose and shabby faun" suffers the mortification of an audience leering at the acrobat with whom he is entombed, as he lovingly performs his turn, cooing and resigning "I am the loser for my tenderness".

Cronin describes a society in which egotism and rigorous class distinctions

are at work — especially in Ireland itself. Although many of his discursive poems deal in abstractions (with titles such as "Responsibilities" and "Experience") his toughest verses offer specific illustrations of human malaise; in "The Man Who Went Absent From The Native Literature" long loping sentences discover the traditional myths of his country's past in a recitative that is characteristic of his more recent work. But his *four de force* to date (pending the completion of an ambitious sequence of over 200 sonnets, a selection from which is featured here) is his labyrinthine, and subsequently hailed as a prophecy of the latest "Troubles". The eleven sections of this long poem assemble a pragmatic vision of one of the century's mythopoetic disasters, running together an old man's reminiscences of 1912 with the tawdry lives of Irish émigrés; the boat itself is a microcosm of a divided society, from steerage to stateroom, the deluded aspirations in the former contrasted with the destructive selfishness of the latter. Cronin's triumph in this poem is that his image is at once unifying and diverse (what he calls elsewhere a "magnolia lithos"), binding together multiple suggestions of the ship of state, the island of Ireland and the Ship of Fools. It is an archetype of his work, wry, taut and heartfelt.

Paul Durcan is a genuinely inventive poet whose work ranges from the gnome distich to the long improvisatory monologue, and he is by turns outlandish, sentimental and depressing. His poems are distinguished by their idiosyncratic particularity, which often tell a little story in themselves, like newspaper headlines: "Three Hooded Men Made Redundant", "Minister Opens New Home for Battered Husbands" — and by an exotic cast of characters. Although a few of his poems are designed primarily as entertainments, Durcan's work represents an extraordinary amalgam of the Romantic, the elegiac, the satirical, the humorous. His chief targets, wittingly portrayed, are institutional figures who stultify the life of the nation — these can include judges, architects, teachers and the religiously dogmatic hypocrites of the Church; especially, such through his poems: one bishop murders his wife, and other dreams of a harlot, a Reverend Mother gets pregnant, and all are socially tolerated in a world reminiscent of Skelton's or Chaucer's. But this humorous dimension is darkly shaded, as in "Two History Professors Found Guilty of Murder", where the academics (both named, Cypriotti) are exposed the dithering of a black colleague who had "consistently encouraged his students to ascertain the true facts / of the history of Ulster".

This vision is brought to bear on any time, and there are seen to be many that counterpoint the life-affirming qualities of Irish culture. Some poems chart the bourgeois confusion of love

Land's End

It seems most of us stood here once
With some indifference, on this lost rock
Namad Finis Torree: Deep steep down-hills
And climbs, slow green surges-forward swelled

And thumped below, arriving from somewhere
Unknown about which we did not care.
Metaphysically might a few speak of these
Surgings-forward as if adjunct to defaced

Permitted mystery. Whales might
Know more, whales also did not care.
So we turned our sheep-skinned backs to that
Incessant wind off-sea, our face

To what we knew by land. Among such were screams
Of pleasures of our appetites, screams of delivery.
Screams of wounds in war, high long
Pitch of Haydn's violins, sonnets

Agalo read, countings of cash, quick
Graces public and intimate, feel of bands.
Of the sharp few, have some since — oo wonder —
Thrown their silvered images away.

Emptied of belief, there's oow nothing
They can't quickly turn up or verify about
Lit's say great waves and surges: We have
Pictures of very far away small

Pools, sod lekis sod capes, measurements too
Of seas we do not visit. We have maps,
And lastency. Ignorant as we may be
Of ourselves and sceptical of glory.

Most of us are still not much concerned
By child in earth awaking us: or avao addi,
As once before vaguely we supposed
Must come to us, by staggering fra.

Geoffrey Grigson

Choosing between codes

W. Haas

FRANÇOIS GROSGJEAN

Life with Two Languages: An
Introduction to Bilingualism
370pp. Harvard University Press.
£14.
0 674 53091 8

The preface to this "Introduction to Bilingualism" declares two aims: while attempting to "survey the vast and complex field of bilingualism", François Grosjean wishes to show "how natural" it is to be bilingual. This gives a lively personal touch to his book, but not without some risk of overstatement.

There are problems about naturalness. We may accept that the alternate use of two languages is "as natural" to the bilingual as using only one language is to the monolingual; there is ample evidence for that in the testimony of bilinguals (the presentation of which is said to be a third aim of this book). But one has to ask whether it is as natural to become bilingual as it is to become monolingual, and whether it is as natural for an individual or a group to continue being bilingual as it is for either to continue being monolingual.

Always, we find, one has to make special provisions for a child to grow up truly bilingual. One has to decide on a "strategy". There are several to choose from: some are for a simultaneous acquisition of two languages — for example, one with father and the other with mother, or one at home and the other outside, others aim at a successive acquisition of two languages — generally by leaving it to school to teach the majority language. It appears that the more natural the "strategy" is — for example, by allowing a free alternation of the two languages from the very beginning — the less likely it is to succeed: the majority language is likely to become dominant and increasingly to oust the other. As Grosjean remarks: "What is essential in the development of bilingualism is that the child feels the need to use two languages in everyday life. That need, however, tends to disappear. As soon as the child discovers that both parents can be talked to in one and the same language, he or she will refuse to shoulder the burden of learning a second, or, having learned already, quickly drop it. The reason is, simply, that the whole community, in which the child is growing up, finds it natural to do the same."

This emerges clearly from the first two chapters: a brief survey of "Bilingualism in the world", and a detailed account of "Bilingualism in the United States". The latter may be regarded as paradigmatic for a number of countries — especially for the United Kingdom where large-scale immigration over the past few decades has given rise to similar conditions and similar problems.

Bilingualism in the United States has always been short-lived — a transitional stage in a process beginning with one kind of monolingualism and ending with another, the replacement of the language of immigrants by the uniform and exclusive use of English by their descendants. The account we are given here of this change of language ("language shift") is emotively charged. Minority groups are always said to have "lost their native language" (as if the United States were now populated by people without a native language). We hear of "flight from and abandonment of key aspects of immigrant cultures", of "culture shock" or "clash", of "adjustments", of "loss of identity", of "assimilation", of "acculturation", of "loss of a language" (as if the United States were now populated by people without a native language). We hear of "flight from and abandonment of key aspects of immigrant cultures", of "culture shock" or "clash", of "adjustments", of "loss of identity", of "assimilation", of "acculturation", of "loss of a language" (as if the United States were now populated by people without a native language).

Neither Weinreich nor Haugen would deny the importance of the two kinds of gradation which, for the purpose of their studies, they proposed to ignore. Their reason for ignoring them, for abstracting from them, was simply that there was a great deal to be said that was true of every "contact of languages" no matter how slight the contact or how different the "languages". "The mechanisms of interference", said Weinreich, "abstracted from the amount of it, would appear to be the same whether the contact is between Chinese and French or between two sub-varieties of English." And they are the same for different degrees of proficiency in one language or the other. This very general study of interference has proved to be productive over a wide field. There were applications to foreign-language teaching and to the historical study of languages. Since an underlying "first" language (or "substratum") interferes with the acquisition of a second one, it is plausible to assume that there may be lasting effects on the latter. Or, again, languages in contact may be found to grow more similar (to "converge"). Of these wider perspectives of the study of bilingualism, there is little or nothing in Grosjean's survey; nor are there references to historical linguistics (if applied or in historical linguistics, as Fries or Lado or Martinet or, indeed, Schuchardt). Thus, no advantage is taken of the extreme generality of the taken of the definition of bilingualism; at the same time, no provision is made to guard against the disadvantages.

Among the citizens of a country, it is generally only a minority who need more than a very slight proficiency in a second language. Even if the language of the majority is said to be the mainstream of the school, Grosjean does not approve of "bilingualism". He prefers "an

"education leading to linguistic and cultural diversification". And yet his own survey of bilingualism in various parts of the world can be cited in support of these parents and educational administrators who reject "assimilatory" objectives he rejects. The condition that would, on the contrary, favour "language maintenance" (rather than "shift") can, almost without exception, be seen to be undesirable: the most reliable of those "favourable conditions" are geographic concentration of the minority group and social and cultural isolation from the majority. The aboriginal or immigrant parents of the United States do not seem to be fond of reservations, or ghettos, or castes.

Grosjean acknowledges in the very first chapter that, though there are numerous instances of prolonged bilingualism, it requires special reasons for a group to remain bilingual; the usual outcome of bilingualism... is a return to monolingualism. That "return" may proceed by different routes: the minority language may disappear (which is the normal development in the United States); or it may become dominant and exclusive (as happened after the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire); or the languages may attain equal status, which removes the need for bilingualism (as in Switzerland); or one of the two languages has its normal uses reduced to a special range of functions (as happened with Latin when it withdrew to become the second and "foreign" language of scholars, lawyers and clergymen in medieval Europe).

The spread and stability of bilingualism in a population is often overestimated by failing to take account of differences of degree. There are two kinds of significant gradation, and neglect of both has been inherent in the very definition of bilingualism. To quote from Einar Haugen's early *Bilingualism in the Americas* (1956): "Our definition does not specify (a) how much the speaker has to know (from a mere mattering to literary mastery), nor (b) how different two idioms have to be to qualify as 'languages'. Similarly, on the latter gradation, Uriel Weinreich (in his *Language Contact in Contact*, 1953) 'For the purposes of the present study, it is immaterial whether the two systems are 'languages', 'dialects of the same language', or 'varieties of the same dialect'."

Socio-linguistic terminology in this field of study is prolific in some respects, but miserably to the point of obscurity in others. *Bi-, plur-, and multi-* are being used interchangeably to combine with *-lingual*. This does not do much harm. But it can be seriously misleading if all those terms are applied not only to individuals but also to communities, countries, and nations. The analogy of two languages co-existing, on the one hand, and an individual (who speaks them) and, on the other hand, within the frontiers of a country (which doesn't remain confusing, even if "individual" or "genuine" is prefixed to "bilingualism" or "bilingualism" in the second, plural nouns would still be ambiguous between a collective and a distributive sense; a description of the "Indians or the South African miners as multilingual may easily be taken to imply that the individuals are. We need to be reminded all the time that in a "bilingual community" there need not be any bilingual speakers. The present book is full of such warnings. And yet, from the fact that there are thirty times more languages than there are nations, many have thought it safe to conclude that not only many nations but also very many of their citizens must be bi- or multi-lingual.

Grosjean (following others) adopts yet another arbitrary use of the same terms: a country or nation is said to be "officially bilingual" if it recognizes only one official language, and to be bi- or multi-lingual if it recognizes more than one. Thus, for a country to be bilingual in this "official" sense would imply its being bilingual in the "societal" sense; but the reverse is not true. We need to be warned, now, not only that there may be no bilinguals in a "bilingual country", but also that there may be any number of such in a "monolingual country". Tanzania, which is multi-lingual, in the societal sense, but monolingual in Grosjean's third sense (with Swahili as the one official

language), has a high proportion of those legendary 90 per cent of bilingual individuals. In Ireland, on the other hand, which is bilingual in both the societal and the official sense, only about 2 per cent of the population are said to be bilingual. Similarly, India which is multilingual in these two senses "doesn't have a high proportion of bilinguals". "Bilingual countries", we learn, "do not contain many bilinguals." This is not surprising. If everything, from education to newspapers and TV is available in two languages, if officials can be addressed and legal documents be made out in either, then the need for a second language disappears; and most people will not shoulder the burden of bilingualism if they can avoid it.

Grosjean complicates matters even further by distinguishing "basically monolingual" from "basically multilingual monolingual" countries, according to whether the one official language is the mother-tongue of the great majority (as in France, Germany or Japan) or not (as in Tanzania or Ghana). Whether Ireland or Finland would analogously be described as "basically monolingual bilingual" countries is not clear.

The terminology invites confusion: yet remedies are readily available. All that seems required is that the terms "mono-", "bi-", and "multi-lingual" be reserved for describing an individual person who makes alternate use of one or two or more languages. For countries, populations — the obvious terms to distinguish the linguistically uniform from the diverse are "homolingual" and "heterolingual". And, lastly, it does not seem advisable to use either of these oppositions for distinguishing a single-language administration from one that is linguistically divided. Why not speak simply, here, of one, two, or more official languages?

Not all the conceptual tangles are due to a lack of required distinctions; some are due to distinctions being overdrawn. A case in point is Grosjean's treatment of "code-switching". The explanation we are given of the term's meaning is clear enough. Defined as "the alternation use of two languages in the same utterance or conversation", it is simply illustrated — for example: "Va chercher Marc et brise him avec un chocholet with cream on top." What we are told here, is a common variety of bilingual speech — a variety that is strictly reserved for the company of fellow-bilinguals. In its being chosen for the occasion, and preferred to monolingual speech, it differs not only from (a) involuntary interference of one language with another (as, for example, in a foreign accent), but obviously, too, from (b) any normal use of loan-words (such as the intrusion of *weekend* or *interview* into French speech). Interference and loan-words would occur equally in a bilingual's monolingual speech. Here, the acquisition of one of the two languages has been cut short at an elementary stage; and the speaker — who, again, is not really bilingual — fills the gaps with fragments of another. He is speaking a "pidgin". Like those other *forme-de-mixage* mixers, he has no choice; but unlike them, he uses his mixed language with speakers of various languages with whom he shares nothing but the heterogeneous fragments of his mixtures. It follows that the patchwork of such a lingua franca has to be severely limited, being restricted to its vocabulary and in the complexity of its grammatical structures. It is confined within a narrow range of uses.

Pidgins have been described as reduced languages. They are degenerate in the biological sense, and are generally as ephemeral as other kinds of code-mixing. Occasionally, however, a pidgin may be transitional, not on the way to adoption of an existing language, but, surprisingly, as a growing-point of a new language. If the conditions that gave rise to it persist, then its poverty need not last. Students of the history of languages have been fascinated by such speculations of regeneration: of new languages ("creoles") developing in something like laboratory conditions. In the social upheavals of our

choice, having the resources for choice: i.e. on the degree of its bilingualism. If his proficiency in either of the two languages is deficient, then his alternation between them is not correct, but imposed; gaps in one language need to be filled by the other. We may agree, here, to speak of "code-mixing". For Grosjean, however, this, too, is "code-switching" (though not in the chapters in which he defines the term).

What seems to be required here is, once more, recognition of a continuous gradation: from "switches" to "mixtures", from "alternating one's languages" to "languages alternating". Generally, a bilingual speaker's fluency in each of his two languages is specialized in some respects; he will then tend to use the languages as complementary to one another. He has not so much a preference for switching as a disposition for it. Naturally, the reasons for a complementary use of two languages may be even more compelling. The speaker may be a beginner in the acquisition of a second language (not really bilingual yet) or — and this is the more interesting case — he may be on the way to forgetting his first language (not really bilingual any more). Such speakers are found to be, themselves, disappearing and apologetic about their "mixed language".

Grosjean considers "language-forgetting" to be a powerful reason for code-switching. Unavoidable "switches" (mixtures) are a harbinger of change. The underlying and constantly recurring conditions of the process are obvious. For bilingualism to be maintained, the bilingual requires the company of monolinguals. On either side, the company of fellow-bilinguals cannot be sufficient simply because, with them, one of the languages is redundant. In the normal course of events, however, monolingual speakers of an immigrant minority (most of them being grandparents) are a dying species. Competence in the minority language is then bound to degenerate; and once it has been reduced to mere fragments of an unavoidably mixed language, the use of which is restricted to the company of bilinguals, the time has come for the dominant language to take over. This natural development may be delayed by continued new additions to the immigrant minority or by constant contact, across frontiers, with monolingual speakers of the threatened language. This is what keeps Spanish alive for those much-commended immigrants from Mexico who settle in the border-regions of the United States. But normally, code-mixing is the last stage of a fading bilingualism.

There is still another kind of unavoidable code-mixing — which, in this book, is wholly dissociated from the rest, although it is essentially similar to the mixtures of speakers who learn or forget a language: it, too, has a made-up vocabulary by deficient competence. Here, the acquisition of one of the two languages has been cut short at an elementary stage; and the speaker — who, again, is not really bilingual — fills the gaps with fragments of another. He is speaking a "pidgin". Like those other *forme-de-mixage* mixers, he has no choice; but unlike them, he uses his mixed language with speakers of various languages with whom he shares nothing but the heterogeneous fragments of his mixtures. It follows that the patchwork of such a lingua franca has to be severely limited, being restricted to its vocabulary and in the complexity of its grammatical structures. It is confined within a narrow range of uses.

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technological age, the "experiment" has repeated itself in several places. As a heterolingual population is assembled—according to plans for sperringly everything except language—it happens frequently that the emerging lingua franca of a reduced patchwork idiom takes root: within two or three generations, it turns native, enriches its vocabulary, acquires ever greater structural complexity, and extends the range of its uses.

Such eccentric developments, which do not proceed at the leisurely pace of what we regard as normal linguistic evolution, are (as R. A. Hall has pointed out) similar to what has been proposed by some language-planners: the deliberate reduction of a given language (such as Latino sine flexione or Basic English) to a kind of pidgin,

and more extensive mixtures (like Esperanto) are a kind of creole. None of these proposals appears to be promising; they cannot compete with the richer traditions of existing world-languages. Even an established creole has an uncertain future: in a similar competition, it tends to sprout varieties that shade off into one of its source-languages, and is then liable to be replaced by that language. Pidgins and creoles are only just mentioned in Grosjean's survey, and this in spite of (or, perhaps, because of) their obvious connection with his recurrent defence of code-switching. Of artificial languages, only one is mentioned, but this is considered in greater detail: the American Sign-language of the Deaf is suggestively compared to languages of other minorities.

The central chapters offer a survey of recent educational and psycholinguistic research. The general impression to be derived from it is not encouraging. For almost any line of research, when we pursue it over a number of years, we find the succession of tests to fall into a dismal pattern: first, a voguish hypothesis is confirmed; next, another battery of tests succeed in confirming a contradictory hypothesis; finally, both kinds of tests are critically examined, and their results are found to be due either to a prejudicial choice of subjects or to uncontrolled conditions of the tests themselves. It is not surprising that, for "describing a person's bilingualism", Grosjean prefers to rely on case-histories, rather than tests.

Some significant and puzzling facts, which do not lend themselves to very general assumptions about "the value of bilingualism" or "the nature of linguistic competence", remain unexplained. The difficulty, for instance, that is experienced by many very fluent bilinguals when they are asked to translate from one of their languages into the other does not seem to have been tackled to all. Apparently, a hypothesis is not easy to come by. We do not seem to know enough about translation, and not enough about the skill of it, to enable us to explain how it differs from the skill of speaking two languages. Grosjean presents the problem—though, characteristically, without connecting it with his report (some fifty pages earlier) on the remark-

able "translating skill" of bilingual children. This is not a survey to turn to for sustained thought on any aspect of bilingualism. It offers strongly held opinions, rather than arguments to support them. The six overlapping chapters can, without much loss, be read in any order. But they do, under their various headings, provide us with a useful assembly of relevant facts, and with references to a research-literature which, even as long ago as 1956 when Haugen set out to review it, was described by him as "mammoth". Anyone interested in the distinctly personal aspects of bilingualism will find it rewarding to dip into this survey; he is bound to discover a good deal that has escaped his own attempts at mountaineering.

Touched by Tibet

John Hurrell Crook

ANDREW HARVEY
A Journey in Ladakh
236pp. Cape. £8.50.
0 224 02036 0

A Journey in Ladakh is a young man's book full of the enthusiasm for distant, dusty lands where wisdom other than our own are found; a book as much about tourists as it is about the local people, not a book of adventure but one about experiences in buses, gentle walks that often have no clear destination and conversations in bars and monastery rooms. Andrew Harvey's holiday tourism that succeeds because he eventually drops his skills, his need to write his Oxbridge preoccupations and his inner melancholia and is prepared to hear the sounds and voices of an essential simplicity. In the end he glimpses the radical clarity of Buddhism revealed at its best in the person of a high lama of great integrity with a gift for showing people themselves. To reach this starting point he does not travel far but sees the sights of Ladakh with a fresh eye inspired by landscape:

For Ladakh has (rightly) become a Mecca for that ever-growing band of Europeans touched by Tibet and its sad history who wish to see the remnants of the pre-1959 culture still extant and strong in this mountain-locked land. Yet, as with tourism everywhere, the process destroys the very essence of the place that attracts it. Harvey gives us brilliant little descriptions of fellow tourists whose spiritual needs and illusions draw them in a steady stream of overcrowded buses to a country ill equipped to receive them. Hospitality is now strained to its limits and, with expectations set so high, disillusionment will be inevitable for many.

There are memorable passages: the entranced oracle at Sabu coming out of her traditional role to scream: "He is a foreigner. He does not believe. He comes to test me. He is a fool!" and following up with clear insight and opinion: Georges Perce: "I am in despair. Otherwise I am thirty-five years old, unmarried and quite

cheerful", whose palindromes are devastating: "Elu par cett crapule" and "Esop restelci et se repose"; the incorrigible Dilip with his noisy, perceptive wife; and the translation session with Nawang Tsering when the two of them produced some lovely renderings of Ladakhi songs:

In the old days
In the old days of Shey
Everyone wore brocade of dragons
And danced like peacocks.

Yet, almost in spite of its ease of style, precise editing and packaged presentation, this book is ultimately concerned with heartfelt experience.

Although it remains unclear as to what command of Tibetan or Ladakhi he actually has, Harvey achieves a directness of contact that would be impossible for most visitors. He is as genuinely touched by this land as his people. His poet's eye leads him aright when, early in his journey, he selects an image of sunlight around which to weave his tale. There was a farm high in the hills, alone, dwarfed by mountains. Three horses stood motionless in pools of dark gold light, a crescent field of white glowing in the sun. This experience of landscape intensifies when he spends some days alone at the old monastic village of Alci. Without a realization of what is happening, he is thrown into meditation by the stillness and power of the place. "In the new transparency of my mind, I find that everything is the same sound, the same ringing sound only in different registers, different intensities. I am frightened that I shall not be able to survive so much feeling." And later: "Yet—I need more than this rock, this light, these birds. I need to be taught

how to work with what I have begun to know here—I am no longer afraid of happiness, I feel—that it will be a master, clearer and more powerful than any of the griefs I have known—I returned to Leh."

Harvey's account of his meetings with Thuksey Rinpoche and with the other monks and lamas of his entourage is deeply personal and sensitively conveyed. Apparently unaware of the psychological power of the meditative frames of mind into which he sometimes now falls, he begins to receive the Rinpoche's teaching through simply being with the man and, as it were, imbibing his spirit, rather than through any spoken words

—significant as these are. One can sense his breathing quietening down, the muscles becoming less tense, the voice softer, less insistent, and the mind emptying and stumbling across love, surprised by joy.

Yet the Western intellect, as so often, re-asserts itself, insisting on a pose of participant observer; the writing is too self-important and opportunistic for silence seem almost wilfully to be missed. Perhaps too quickly introduced to the practice of visualization before a capacity for stillness has been learned, Harvey nevertheless leaves for England with new insights, hope, and a deep love and respect for a remarkable man.

Tossing the word-salad Down with deduction

Jethro Acworth

E. M. KIRKPATRICK (Editor in Chief)
Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary
1,583 pp. Edinburgh: Chambers.
19.95.
0 550 10234 5

The new edition of *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* (the apostrophe went some years ago) will undoubtedly please players of word games and solvers (let alone compilers) of crossword puzzles. The publishers are aware of the fact that their dictionary is already widely loved and used by such people and make much of this in presenting the new edition. "The unusual and archaic words in Chambers", says the new preface, "are a positive treasure-store for the word-wielder" (thereby introducing us, incidentally, to two hyphenated words not in the dictionary itself).

Why, we may reasonably ask? What is it about this very Scottish English dictionary that has endeared it to the "large and loyal readership" claimed by the editor? The reason must lie principally in its breadth of coverage coupled with a markedly liberal policy on the qualifications required of a word for inclusion in an ostensibly English dictionary, which together point to an engagingly idiosyncratic approach.

What other reason could there be for including *umataker* (*umataker* in the last edition), the Swedish plural form of an Eskimo word meaning a point of rock appearing above the surface of land-ice, or *laido*, a Japanese form of fencing, than that they simply appealed to the lexicographer? And why not? E. M. Kirkpatrick maintains that for its size *Chambers* is unparalleled in its comprehensiveness. She may well be right (though if its size is unique, so what?) Few will have the stamina to count 1,583 pages-worth of entries for the dubious satisfaction of challenging such a claim. Certain it is that *Chambers* is big. Though with fewer pages than the old edition the new one has a larger page size and a more elegant layout; a better balance between the typefaces used, a more generous space between the columns of type on the page, and a greater extension of the headwords, all of which should please the user, albeit subliminally. But what adds most to the overall number of entries in the new edition is the improved cross-referencing. It was a serious flaw in previous editions (even though one which offered a crossword complex the occasional opportunity for "above-average fluency or wit") that the archaic and obsolete spellings given at the main entry were not given separate entries at their appropriate alphabetical place, which rendered them at times virtually untraceable in their own right. This has now been conscientiously and properly corrected. Another most welcome improvement is the introduction of the double hyphen (—) to indicate a true hyphen and not simply a word-break where this occurs at the end of a line.

This is a neat device than the use of a repeated hyphen at the beginning of the following line. And not before time we now have superior numbers to distinguish separate entries for identically spelled words, a well-established convention *Chambers* has been slow to adopt. It is a pity that the advantages of the International

Phonetic Alphabet as the only universally recognized pronunciation system have so far failed to commend its adoption likewise.

But back to the words. The additions to the lexicon "several thousand" we are told, represent a catholic policy and deft judgment as to staying-power, though the already passing *m-r-shiri* and the dreadfully plodding *yomp* ("esp. mil. coll.") [Poss. imit.] will not be with us for long, if venture. Sports, especially ones we're good at, get a fair showing, with *axel*, *hitz* and *sailchov*. Currying favour, not to mention windsurfing, poragidag, parasailing and even parasailing (do I hear *parasailing*?) and John McEnroe may be pleased to find "the pits" (the absolute worst place, thing, etc. possible) included, even if Nelson Piquet *et al* are less so. And we could surely have done without the *Harvey Smith* (Medical science and our increasing infatuation with bodily functions get a good look in, with *toxic allergy*, *syndrome*, *toxic shock syndrome*, *slimmer's disease*, *sliph-tetoprotein*, *brown fat*, *mid-life crisis*, *rhytidectomy* (face-lift) to you).

Montezuma's revenge, *glycemy* and even *huxepoctomy*; and many food items included for the first time (eg, *fu yung*, *vhiduloo*, *roco*, *tahua*, *gundy*, *ndziki bean*, *kreplach*) testify perhaps to the steady crumbling of our traditional suspicion of exotic fare. We even have *Lyonesvold* to tempt the world's palate in return (if the world can only get its tongue around the name).

Of the new foreign terms accepted by Chambers, *Yiddish* (*kyevich*, *mechuga*, *schmorr*) and Australian (*chunder*, *ocker*, *Buckley's chance*) appear to contribute most, more one suspects for their picturesque appeal than for any other overriding reason. The gloriously grotesque *uey* (= U-turn as in *do o uey*) will prove invaluable to scrabblers (@ with cap.) unless the powers-that-be rule as they justifiably might that *Ausl* = foreign.

It is tempting for a reviewer of a dictionary to dwell on the headword list in assessing its merits, since an analysis of its defining style is an infinitely more complex and demanding task in a limited space. The abiding impression one has with *Chambers* is of a down-to-earth, un-stuffy approach to the interpretation of meaning, traditional yet at the same time individualistic. It is interesting to note that the editor has been persuaded (by popular request, we may suppose) to reinstate a number of the "humorous" definitions dropped in the last edition (many were retained). So we have "picture-restorer" one who cleans and restores and sometimes restores old pictures "peppering" to decorate or embellish (as an offence poem or a pun) and perhaps more famously "ecoli of cake" long in shape but short in duration, with cream filling and chocolate or other icing. In the last of these the reinstated phrase "but short in duration" adds nothing to the definition—its humorous not even very funny—it merely signals to the reader that the lexicographer is human, with human weaknesses; and for that we should be thankful.

Among the new entries which serendipity may reveal to word-fiddlers, though its meaning, "a confused outpouring of speech, most often occurring in cases of schizophrenia", falls quite to fit the bill, the phrase nevertheless serves admirably to suggest what *Chambers* offers.

Chambers later withdrew the claim, largely because the native speakers proved so disappointing; they refused to make such judgments independently of what some they could give the sentence offered them. When their own words were confirmed what they had said, they removed the claim.

Under all the muddle in the book is very good instincts about where to look for insight into what language is and how it works. Moore and Carling also write very well, not small thing in a subject dominated by a man who writes atrociously.

Yorick Wilks

TERENCE MOORE AND CHRISTINE CARLING

Understanding the Language: Towards a Post-Chomskyan Linguistics
225pp. Macmillan. £17.50 (paperback, £5.95).
0 333 27188 2

Noam Chomsky is a woman. All women are over-rated linguists therefore. Noam Chomsky is an over-rated linguist.

It is hard to pass through any educational system without being shown at some point that a true conclusion can follow correctly and ineluctably from utterly false premises. Nonetheless, it is good to have a concrete and effective reminder of the possibility put before one from time to time. But it is a delicate matter to review a book with such a form, if one is to criticize the argument and premises without ever denying the conclusion which, in the present case, is rather subtle than the caricature above.

Chomsky can reasonably be said to have founded modern theoretical linguistics with the publication of *Syntactic Structures* in 1957. His theory, usually known as transformational-generative grammar, and universally abbreviated as TG, has metamorphosed more than once in the years since then: some of its absurdities have disappeared, and it has become generally more elevated in tone, as its claims have spread from being about a language (English) to being about languages, actual and possible, and from being just a linguistic theory to being, at the same time, a theory of mind.

Despite the changes, the core of Chomsky's claims has not altered much: language, for him, and what makes it an independent area of study, is the possibility of generalizations about syntax. It is this claim that has grown to one about general restrictions on the syntax of all possible human languages, and the relation of that to the genetic codowment of the brain at birth since, if the syntax of all languages is restricted in certain ways, it may well be reasonable to claim that it is because human brains were "just made that way".

He sought confirmation of the primacy of syntax in the ability of speakers to decide reliably what is bad and what is not a well-formed sentence of their language, and to do so on grounds that had nothing to do with the meaning of the sentence. That was the general and, in importance, of the immortal line "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously", which Chomsky hoped speakers would judge meaningless and that it was a correct sentence of English. Just to help him out, some poets actually incorporated the line into their work, so it now has a special and peculiar status, like the more agreeable lines of *Jabberwocky* before it.

Chomsky later withdrew the claim, largely because the native speakers proved so disappointing; they refused to make such judgments independently of what some they could give the sentence offered them. When their own words were confirmed what they had said, they removed the claim.

importance previously accorded to the native speaker! But he never withdrew his claims about the primacy of syntax, and what he called its autonomy from considerations of meaning and communication. He once admitted that, for him, it was a mere accident that sentences were used by people to communicate with one another.

Terence Moore and Christine Carling remind the reader of all these twists and turns, but do not fully bring out how shoddy they seem when judged against the standards of scientific explanation: no scientist could jettison data, informants, verification criteria and theories in turn, in the way Chomsky has, and survive. But linguistics is not a science, no matter how much Chomsky and his followers believe it is, yet since a principal theme of Moore and Carling is that the study of language should not be judged by the standards of science, they are not able to show how far Chomsky falls short of those standards.

This book has already been subjected to an extraordinary barrage of abuse from Chomsky's supporters in this country. It has been an odd spectacle, particularly as the anti-Chomsky arguments of the book are so out of date (nearly all of them were set out in print by others in the 1960s and 70s), and one might well wonder where all this energy is coming from. Again, Chomsky's ideas never had the following here they did in the United States, yet now, when Chomsky has been accorded a just and fairly calm place in linguistics there, one in which his role is recognized and his formalisms adopted, but without any need to believe his peculiar claims and theories, suddenly he is acrimoniously attacked and equally fervently defended in Europe. This is not the progress of science, but more like the way rock stars' reputations rise and fall independently on different continents or, to take a more serious metaphor, the skirmish here is reminiscent of those forgotten islands where hostilities go on only because both sides are unaware that a general ceasefire has been declared in capitals far away.

Chomsky's claim that there are "universals of syntax", discoverable in all languages, may or may not be true; the evidence is pretty thin, but it would be highly interesting if it were true. What cannot be questioned, though, is that Chomsky has laid down a formalism, and a way of describing the interpretation of languages, that cannot now be ignored: too much work has been done using them. Where Moore and Carling do badly wrong, whatever the broad truth of their conclusions, is to muddle matters of formalism with the issue of deduction. The central criticism in their book is that Chomsky offers only "deductively formulated theories" of language and, they write, "it is pragmatic and fruitless to introduce axiomatized theories" in the social sciences. Of course it is; but Chomsky never does. It is very hard to find an axiomatized theory (which is to say, a theory with all its deductions set out explicitly) in any science, but quite impossible in linguistics.

Art undergradients coming to the study of linguistics are often repelled by its formalisms. One tells them, patiently that having a formalism does not make a subject mathematics, a subject they all fear, because there are no proofs or theorems in what they will go on to study. The formalism is merely descriptive; critics would say, merely descriptive. This point is not pushed

home as hard as it should be by teachers of linguistics because they are normally arts men too, untouched by mathematics, and perhaps do not want to play down the skills they have acquired with such difficulty. So with Moore and Carling, I fear: they simply mistake the formalism of TG for a mathematics, or a fully deductive science, the very same error their Chomskyan critics fall into.

But if by their phrase "deductively formulated theories" they mean not TG itself but Chomsky's style of explanation, then again it is not deductive in any stronger sense than that in which behind any passage of discursive English prose there might lurk some interpretation of its sentences that is an explicit deduction. In such a sense of the phrase, *Ulysses*, for example, may have a deductively complete interpretation, acc to be revealed by appropriate research. In short, the authors concede too much to Chomsky: that he is deductive; that he axiomatizes. Would that he did, say his sterner critics.

Another odd feature of the book may clarify this central point. In note at the end of their prologue, the authors mention Artificial Intelligence (AI), a subject which seeks to model aspects of human reasoning on a computer. Its proponents, like our authors, wish to replace the Chomskyan view of language with one more based to meaning, reasoning and communication; it is no accident that Chomsky has always distanced himself from any approach to language based on computation. Our authors claim some common cause with AI, and the book is much decorated with phrases like "linguistic processes" and "data bases".

But a little discussion of, and reflection on, the nature of AI should have turned our authors back from their own main criticism of Chomsky. If (and it is a huge if) a language like English can, now or in the future, be analysed, generated, understood, if you wish, by a computer, (as AI workers hope), then the processes their programs use must at some level be deductive. There is no need to consider the programs at such a level: it is a commonplace that such programs often work by hit-and-miss methods, normally called *heuristics* precisely to distinguish them from the sure and complete methods of deduction. Nonetheless, it remains true that every computer program that works has an interpretation that is a red-blooded deduction, a fact (and it is a trivial fact) which follows simply from its being such a program, even though that may not be a revealing or insightful way to consider it, nor one the programmer himself had in mind.

The moral of all this is that Moore and Carling picked a bad argument to batter Chomsky with: however right their conclusions, they never actually offered a "deductive" theory, yet they offered a "deductive" theory of theory one has no other kind of aim for, if one can have, or at least aim for, to program one's theories on a computer. And one's theories on a computer, and a neighbouring subject that Moore and Carling approve of when it suits them, but whose details they woefully ignore, offers just such theories.

Under all the muddle in the book is very good instincts about where to look for insight into what language is and how it works. Moore and Carling also write very well, not small thing in a subject dominated by a man who writes atrociously.

Northern outposts

Simon Digby

MARY SHEPHERD SLUSSER

Nepal: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley
Two volumes: 491pp. Princeton University Press. £91.80.
0 691 03128 2

Between the high Himalayas and the outer ranges, between Gligli to the north-west and the eastern frontier of the Indian plains down to the Nepal, there are only two levels, cultivable areas which have been able to sustain, through millennia, cultural traditions comparable in richness to the regional cultures of the Indo-Gangetic valleys of Kashmir and of Kathmandu, with the second of which Mary Shepherd Slusser is concerned. By comparison with the broad kingdoms of the plains these valleys are of small extent: the Vale of Kashmir is approximately eighty-four miles long and twenty to twenty-five wide, the Kathmandu valley, some fifteen miles long and about twelve miles across at its widest.

These two valleys were the last comfortable staging-posts on difficult routes to Sikkim or Tibet. Chink or Central Asia and both had developed powerful local idioms of Buddhist and Brahmanical culture by the second half of the first millennium AD. In the Kathmandu valley many Sanskrit inscriptions survive. Mary Shepherd Slusser records more of these than any previous writer in English—while in Kashmir a chronicle tradition developed unequalled in South Asia. In the thirteenth century Kashmiri culture somehow ran out of steam or, as is evidenced by the rapid decay of the sculptural tradition there.

In the last few centuries the lot of the inhabitants of the Kathmandu valley appears to have been more fortunate than that of the Kashmiris, who have been reduced to a state of "down-country" colonial rule. There, there was no Kathmandu (whose *Rajatarangini* provided us with much evidence of social-scale violence, torture and massacre in Kashmir) to tell of the horrors of the regent who murdered his own sons when they attained the age of majority, though, Dr Slusser's chapter on "Mothers and

Grandmothers: the encompassing Ghost" mentions that these female deities were "prophitiated with blood and alcohol". In the Kathmandu valley three kingdoms existed for centuries within two hours' walk of one another. The destruction of the great Buddhist monasteries of Eastern India and of the Sana kingdom of Bengal, which were overrun by Muslim invaders, brought an influx of refugees to Nepal; and Nepali sculpture and illustrated manuscripts from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century are of exceptional vigour. New influences continued to be absorbed from the cultural centres of the Indian plains down to the nineteenth century; and in some instances transmitted onwards to Tibet and metropolitan China.

The relative stability of this advantageous place, society was disturbed in the mid-eighteenth century when Prithwinarayan Shah, Rajput power-holder of Gorkha, a hill fortress two ravines away from the Kathmandu valley, went down to Benares, always a centre of intellectual influence on Nepal, where he discovered the advantages of the musket. It took him twenty-five years to subdue the three kongs of the Kathmandu valley, after which the "Gorkhas" established a military empire extending to the present territorial frontiers of Nepal.

The Gorkhas were too a collision course with the East India Company, like such "country powers" as Tipu Sultan, the Marathas and the Sikhs. But the Company's officers did not understand the difficulties of Himalayan warfare, and early punitive expeditions came to grief, finally that, able commander, Sir David Ochterlony, brought the Gorkhas to a satisfactory treaty settlement of the frontiers of the Nepal Terai (low-country). After this, like the courts of Lucknow, Delhi, Poona and Hyderabad, the court of Kathmandu had its British "Resident". Nepal's independence was threatened by the balance was altered by the timely arrival of the Gorkha commander-in-chief, Jung Bahadur, with a contingent of 9,000 men to help the British suppress the Indian insurrection of 1857. The privileges maintained after this ensured the survival of an independent kingdom of Nepal with its capital at Kathmandu.

One consequence of this privileged relationship was that European writers admitted to Nepal with great

reluctance, and "orientalists" had little hope of pursuing their studies there. Brian Houghton Hodgson, the East India Company's Assistant Resident and then Resident at Kathmandu from 1820 to 1844, was a keen Sanskritist and a collector of information in the best tradition of his British Indian contemporaries, but among his numerous learned publications there was no overall survey of the history and civilization of the Kathmandu valley. At the end of the nineteenth century the French orientalist Silvain Lévy published a three-volume study, but he was not permitted to stay long in the country.

Changes took place only after the successful coup which overthrew the Rana mayors of the palace in 1950. Tourists then arrived in increasing numbers on short-term visas, and some Western research students were permitted to stay, study and take photographs in Nepal, or rather the Kathmandu valley, was stripped of most of its small and portable works of art by Western tourists and Indian art-dealers, and these have subsequently furnished part of the basis for a chronology of Nepalese art.

Like earlier recorders of inaccessible societies Slusser was at hand at a critical time with appropriate training and resources. Trained as an archaeologist and anthropologist, and married to an American official stationed in Nepal, she had the opportunity of six years' residence between 1965 and 1971, as well as support from the Smithsonian and the JDR III Fund, which was spent on hiring Nepali research assistants, "a young draftsman", field-work, a photographic archive and a search for parallels to Nepalese monuments in the architecture of the eastern Indian plains.

The pace of change in the Kathmandu valley is now alarming, and it is fortunate indeed that Slusser was there to record so much before the landscape was irrevocably altered. The results of her labours are two handsome quarto volumes of majestic proportions, more pages of closely printed double columns, and more illustrations than there are squares miles in the territory surveyed. They fill a gap in the British Indian gazetteer tradition, and will be indispensable to those who may want to write on any aspect of the history and society of the Kathmandu valley.

responsibility (especially within families); and we see the role of *karma* (for lack of it) in Buddhist Tibet and Thailand, and in partly-Hinduized Bali.

All of these, in various ways and to various degrees, seem to extend or contradict the stricter, philosophical idea of an individual's own inevitable karma responsibility for his lot and destiny. It is often difficult to know, as S. W. Bradley points out in her essay on religious vows (*vrats*), whether one should see these other kinds of explanation as contradicting or counteracting *karma*—as some clearly seem to do—or whether they might merely depict the particular means by which one's *karma* is brought to fruition. This ambiguity is perhaps not sufficiently attended to in much of the book.

One particularly interesting conjunction of ideas, addressed here notably by S. and E. V. Daniel, is that between *karma* and different kinds of traditional or folkloric medicine. *Karma* here is mixed with ideas of "humours", bodily "psychobiological qualities" (Sanskrit *gunas*, Tamil *kammur*), and the like, and, as C. F. Keyes's introduction has it, in this guise appears to have not only as "an abstract set of ideas to use in orienting themselves to their actions, but [also] us] assumptions about concrete qualities that adhere to persons". (This idea is also basic to Jaina philosophy.) Since these medical concepts are used also in Indian technical psychology and philosophy, there is much room for comparative investigation of the way in which Indian notions of physical and psycho-spiritual aetiology and treatment compare and contrast with our own about the relation between biological medicine, physiological bases of psychology and psychiatry, and purely conceptual, socio-cultural forms of analysis and therapy.

A number of the contributors discuss the problem of free-will and determinism. Some assume *karma* to be wholly deterministic, and comment on apparent departures from it; others argue that the theory itself allows for interpretation in terms both of free-will and determinism. Babu is surely right to suggest that although this ambivalence might be a disadvantage conceptually (to philosophers), it is a positive advantage psychologically and culturally (to people in their day-to-day lives). The theory manages to acknowledge the unpredictability of destiny, and the consequent need we all have at times for fatalistic resignation to "what happens", as well as giving room for some sense of human responsibility and freedom, both retrospective and prospective.

It is a pity that more attention is not paid—Babu's article apart—to the wider issues I have already mentioned. Keyes's introduction is clear and helpful, particularly on the differences between the use of *karma* in the popular practices of Hinduism and that of Buddhism; and on Weber's claim that *karma* is the perfect logical solution to theodicy, in as best an introduction, it concentrates mainly on a "basic delineation of the problems" and, on the contributions to the volume. E. V. Daniel's conclusion is particularly disappointing: a fascinating and real topic seems to get lost in a haze of currently fashionable anthropological jargon. But overall the book is an excellent contribution to the subject.

Steven Collins

CHARLES F. KEYES and E. VALENTINE DANIEL (Editors)

Karma: An anthropological inquiry
313pp. University of California Press. £23.50.
0 520 04429 0

The Indian notion of *karma* claims that what one does and will experience in this life and in future lives is a result of one's own past and present actions (including those in past lives). Max Weber thought that this represented "the most consistent theodicy ever produced by history"; and many theologians and philosophers have followed him in assuming that the Indian response to ethical problems, notably that of evil and the lack of fit between destiny and merit, follows the same model. Equally, Weber thought that the fatalism about the present apparently inherent in the idea, and the next-worldly orientation of hopes for improvement in one's lot, were a causal factor in preventing the growth in India of the voluntarist and this-worldly social and economic attitudes necessary for the rise of capitalism; and again many sociologists, development economists and others have followed Weber in seeing belief in *karma* as a decisive obstacle to the "spirit of modernity".

In a splendidly succinct and clear précis of "Karma in Popular Hinduism" in this volume, L. Babu shows that it is not that "theories such as [these] are necessarily wrong; but that they are really little more than conjectures. It might or might not be true that a belief in *karma* influences behaviour in the ways these theories suggest—or, for that matter, in quite different ways. But what must be stressed is that this is an empirical question." *Karma: An anthropological inquiry* will help us greatly to achieve a realistic grasp of Indian culture, of the kind we need if we are to begin to answer such questions as Weber asked. His work—given the material available to him—was a masterpiece of accurate and scholarly insight. But we know more now, and must try to do better.

The book is the second volume of a projected trilogy. The first, edited by Wendy O'Flaherty, *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions* (reviewed in the TLS, September 24, 1981), showed how the idea of *karma*, even in the traditions of the educated elite, has been expressed in a great many (not always consistent) ways, and how it has always co-existed with many other (not always compatible) explanatory models. The third volume will deal with these ideas in the post-classical literature. The present work concerns *karma* in popular Indian literature and practice. All the writers are anthropologists by training, and their ethnographic material is presented for the most part in a clear, persuasive and illuminating way. A whole range of other explanatory notions and practices are brought in, which coexist with and sometimes replace the idea(s) of *karma*. God's "headwriting", in which one's destiny is written on one's forehead at birth; divination and astrology; one's "appointed lot" (*bhagy*); curses or vows as attempts to change or avoid *karma*; a great many notions of shared, transferred, inherited, or in other ways collective karma; merit and

responsibility (especially within families); and we see the role of *karma* (for lack of it) in Buddhist Tibet and Thailand, and in partly-Hinduized Bali.

All of these, in various ways and to various degrees, seem to extend or contradict the stricter, philosophical idea of an individual's own inevitable karma responsibility for his lot and destiny. It is often difficult to know, as S. W. Bradley points out in her essay on religious vows (*vrats*), whether one should see these other kinds of explanation as contradicting or counteracting *karma*—as some clearly seem to do—or whether they might merely depict the particular means by which one's *karma* is brought to fruition. This ambiguity is perhaps not sufficiently attended to in much of the book.

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